MY ESKIMO FRIENDS

"NANOOK OF THE NORTH"

BY

ROBERT J. FLAHERTY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

FRANCES HUBBARD FLAHERTY

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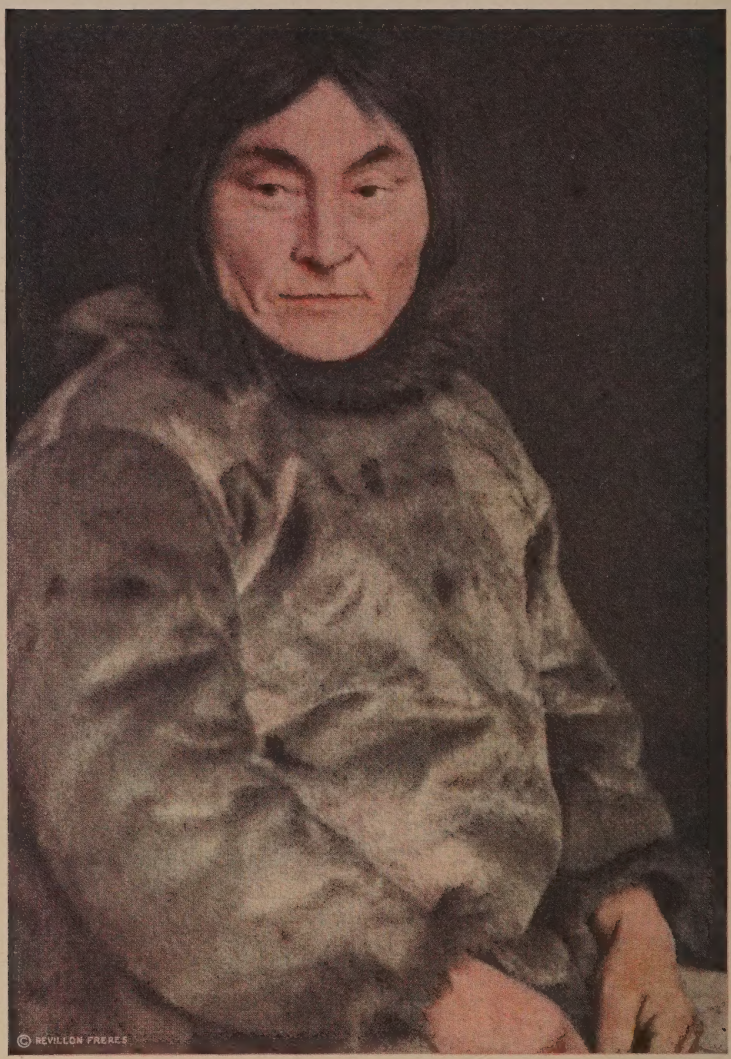

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NANOOK THE BEAR

MY ESKIMO FRIENDS

"NANOOK OF THE NORTH"

BY

ROBERT J. FLAHERTY, F. R. G. S.

IN COLLABORATION WITH

FRANCES HUBBARD FLAHERTY

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAVURES AND COLOR PLATES
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR
HALFTONE DRAWINGS BY
ESKIMO ARTISTS AND MAPS

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1924

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First Edition

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TO
MY FATHER

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PART I

THE DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION OF THE BELCHER ISLANDS

MY ESKIMO FRIENDS

I

THE Government of Canada, in 1910, decided to construct a railway from the wheatfields of the west to the west coast of Hudson Bay in order to provide an outlet for the shipment of wheat through Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait to Europe. Sir William Mackenzie, whose railway, the Canadian Northern, was then in the initial stages of its construction across the continent, decided to investigate the seaboard of Hudson Bay for iron ore. He reasoned that if the shipment of wheat could be successfully carried out, iron ore as well could be shipped to the great markets of the world.

Sir William, in August, 1910, commissioned the writer to undertake an exploration of the Nastapoka Islands, outlying the east coast of Hudson Bay. Upon certain islands of the group, iron ore was reported to occur.

Through the great hinterland of Quebec and Ontario my father[1] had carried on, from the time that I was a boy, extensive explorations for iron ore. With his engineers and prospectors I grew up on explorations whose range, east and west, was more than a thousand miles. Long journeys some of them seemed to be then—through the courses of un-

[1]Robert H. Flaherty, who during his lifetime was the foremost figure in the iron ore exploration of Canada.

mapped lakes and streams, over the height of land and on halfway down the big tumbling rivers whose ends are on Hudson Bay. Hudson Bay was mysterious country. The grizzled old fur traders and the fur brigades of strange Indians, curiously garbed, with hair shoulder-long, whom we sometimes ran into, seemed to be people of another world.

Crew and outfit were modest enough. Crundell, a young Englishman, for the first stage of the journey was my sole companion. A seventeen-foot "Chestnut," beans, bacon, bannock, dried fruit, and tea, the usual grub supply of north-country men, a few simple instruments, and a carbine Winchester, comprised the outfit.

We jumped off for the North from a tiny settlement outlying the northern Ontario frontier, Ground Hog by name, whose only reason for being was that it was a temporary rail end pending the bridging by the Grand Trunk Pacific of the Ground Hog River, upon the stump-scarred banks of which it stood.

Down the silent, sombrely forested courses of the little Ground Hog, into the big Mattagami, and on into the smooth, swift, mile-wide mirror of the Moose was only five days' travel, for though the distance was nearly two hundred miles, the rivers were high and flowing strong.

The rugged granites over which the Mattagami breaks, long "saults," smoking falls, and canyon-slots through the hills, give way about halfway down to a vast muskeg plain which extends for the remainder of the river courses to the sea—a great desolate waste, treeless save along the margins of lakes and streams. Unbrokenly level, in Devonian times, as the fossils in the limestone of its underlying formation

show, it was the floor of the now distant sea. Through it the Mattagami, a deep groove, loops and winds.

Wide scars of brûlée, chafing tangles of tree trunks barked and bleached by the weather, alternated with live forests of sombre fir, silver birches, and long-stemmed, sea-green groves of poplar. Huge portions of it, undermined by the icefields of break-up time in spring and by the floods of high-water season, lay avalanched in chaos on the lower slopes. Trunks, branches, and foliage of the wreckage swayed like dead heads at midstream.

There was little wild life. The raucous cries of wheeling gulls, the "quawk, quawk" of wood duck, were infrequent enough to be startling. Even in the forest places, the cawing of some "Whisky Johnny" for bitsof bannock and bacon rind, and the forlorn cries of "Poor Canada" were the only sounds. Of natives we saw only signs—gaunt tepee frames, sleeping patches of weather-rusted boughs, and here and there poles that, as they inclined upstream or down, pointed out the travellers' direction; or message sticks bearing scrolls of birch bark covered with charcoal writing in the missionary's syllabic Cree.

The Moose begins, impressively large, where the Missanabe from the west and the Mattagami meet. By nightfall it broadened to three miles. The forests of either shore gave way to dreary wastes of muskeg and to spectres of solitary wind-shapen trees. Seaward were long leaden lanes and smoky haze and the mirage of islands in the sky.

On the river's last large island, we reached the great fur stronghold of the North, two and a half centuries old, Moose Factory—an enchanting panorama enchantingly unwinding

—tepees, overturned canoes, green cultivated fields, meadows, hayricks, grazing cattle, prim cottages and rough-hewn cabins, a little old church with a leaning red tower, and in formal array, red-roofed, weather-worn post buildings.

A few curious half-breeds and their wives stood at the edge of the bank as we climbed from the landing. The men slouched, hands in pockets, gazed intently, and the women, in the abashed manner of the country, peered from the hooded depths of their plaid shawls. In the background a group of Indian women and their children lingered furtively. Dogs innumerable, enervated by the warmth of sun, lay sprawled on the green—short-haired Indian curs, and here and there a splendid husky from the barrens of the Eskimos far northward. On the green stood an elaborately staged flagpole flanked by two old bronze field guns; adjacent, the trade shop, over its entrance the Company's emblazoned coat of arms; and deep-set from the green an old three-storied fur warehouse, alongside of it the forge of the armourer and the boatyards of the shipwrights and carpenters; and facing them all the master's white red-roofed mansion with dormer windows and a deep encircling veranda.

With the post officers—they wore informal tweeds and white collars—we dined in the messroom of the mansion, where a moccasined Indian served us from a sideboard array of old silver plate. Travel on the river, the high or low water, and such countryside topics as the approaching goose-hunting time "Hannah Bay way," Tom Pant's silver foxes, Long Mary's good-for-nothing husband, and, of course, what the free-traders were doing, were the topics of conversation. We were somewhat nonplussed that none showed

more than a perfunctory interest in news from the frontier or concern for the mail we had brought—toward the latter not half the avidity one of us would display toward a morning paper. It must be remembered, however, that most of these men are recruited in their teens from the Old Country. Growing up in the service from clerk apprenticeships, they become inured to the monotony of post life, its staid conventions and narrow, unchanging rounds of duty. One interest predominates—the Indian hunter and his fur.

Our host informed us that the chief factor was at Charlton Island, some seventy miles out in the Bay. With him we would have to make arrangements for further stages of travel up the Bay from Charlton. We were provided with an open "York" boat and a crew, one Captain John Puggie, a half-breed post servant, and three upland Indians, one of whom (but not distinguishable save that he was sulkier) was Chief of the Moose River Crees. The Indians with their moccasins and hooded trade capotes, belted thrice around with varicoloured sashes, looked anything but seamen.

We weighed anchor under lowering sky and rising wind, but as we sailed the estuary's channels, twelve winding miles to sea, we had eyes for nothing but the wildfowl around us. Before our thrashing sails, outspread like flails, in panic and alarm they rose in multitudes—wheeling gulls, skimming yellowlegs, darting plover; squawking wood duck, teal, and mallard, that, flying low, would circle us; and from willow-hidden ponds, with a clash and clamour and clumsy tattoo, geese, wildly honking as they climbed awkwardly toward the sky.

Not until we rounded the outer bar did we see the ugly

leer in the sky behind us. In a moment more we were standing out among the turbid reaches of the open bay; the faint gray stippling of upland trees, the sweeps of the delta plain, and the tawny rims of shoreline were lost to view, and walls of rain, flayed by a gale piping through the cordage of creaking spars and wailing above the slosh and hiss and din of the seas around, lashed us, Indians and white men, who grouped for shelter in the open hold. We peered with dismay from the lost shelter of the outer bar to the tumbling steamy wastes ahead, but old Puggie, donning oilers and sou'wester, grimly smiled the fact that we were caught, and settled down to the helm for a day of it. With only a sweep to hold her—the rudder, torn from its pintles, was swept away—Puggie landed us on the Island before nightfall.

II

CHARLTON ISLAND is the deep-sea anchorage of the Hudson's Bay Company's fur ship which annually comes out from England. Here, in summer, is the rendezvous for fur men from hundreds of miles around, who come with their half-breed servants and Indian crews in small "York" boats for their year's mail and goods for their post trade. The place was thronged when we arrived, for the fur ship lately come had cleared again for England. A young Scotchman, just apprenticed to the trade, played his bagpipe to the delight and wonder of the visiting Indians, half-breed longshoremen, and a group of Eskimo migrants of years before from the far-off barrens of the Great Whale Coast, three dumpy little men, their solemn-faced wives, and bashful troop of miniature Jap children. There was also a grizzled white-haired old factor just returned from his first furlough in thirty years; the company's Arctic pilot who had lately navigated a Danish brig through the icefields of Hudson Strait; and the master, mate, and crew of the above-mentioned brig, which, badly wracked by ice, now lay abandoned half-heeled on the beach hard by. Her master, pulling on his long pipe of porcelain, habitually paced the wharf in clattering sabots, deeply distressed over his good ship's inglorious end.

When I explained to the chief factor my plan of travelling northward, to my dismay he said that such a journey at this

late season would be impossible. Snow squalls were already flying, while in the country of my destination winter was even now at hand. We could only wait at Charlton until a schooner came along, then proceed northward along the coast to Fort George, winter there, and upon formation of the first sea ice, continue north by sledge with Eskimos.

The journey to Fort George, though less than two hundred miles, took ten days to make, for head winds held us weather-bound at various of the islands—small, treeless, moss-covered granite domes that mask the desolate "East Main." The excitement of goose-hunting amongst them, the calls of the crew, the lure to firing range, the volleys, the plunge of the kill, and, finally, the goose-roasting supper fires at evening—we spitted them on sticks—were memorable experiences.

Snow was flying and ice gripped the rails, deck, and rigging when we reached Fort George. The factor gave me the best he had by way of food and shelter and arranged that as soon as the sea ice should form, I was to have dogs, sledge, and two drivers for the next stage of travel northward.

By mid-November, heavy frost was in the air. The mouth of the river was soon sealed, and the ponderous banks of mist and rime over the open sea drew daily farther away as the ice edge crept out. Then came snow, the winter's first big "drifter," and for three days there was no land or sea or sky.

With winter come, the decrepit walls of the old post buildings were soon banked eave-high in a masonry of snow as thick as the walls of fortresses. From the entrance of the factor's mansion extended a long passage of snow blocks

head high. The servants' nondescript summer garb gave place to thick capotes of white moleskin, khaki, and blue stroud, trimmed at hood and cuff with fur of otter, mink, or marten.

The dogs, starving prowlers of summer, now insolently thriving, overran the post, thieving among the provision sheds and at kitchen doors, in concert howling to the clanging of the post bell, and at nightfall, around the huge kettle full of steaming cornmeal and tallow as the "dog man" cooked it over a leaping fire in the post yard, fighting murderously like wolves. Unsheltered from the drift they slept in moulds melted by their own body heat, all but their black-tipped muzzles blanketed in snow.

Hungry coasters came filtering into the post during the first week in December, bringing little or no fur, so the factor complained, but with the usual tales of want and distress on their hungry lips. Their coming was the sign that the sea ice was sufficiently safe for travel.

My outfit, long since prepared, was soon assembled in the post yard. Two drivers, nothing if not picturesque in their fur-trimmed capotes, silk-worked gauntlets, elbow long, and leggings of blue stroud, edged with red and bound at the knees with beadwork garters, bustled here and there among the throng of onlookers, harnessing dogs and stringing traces to the sledge, while the factor advised me as to camping ground and native shelters, and the missionary gave me little notes of introduction, written in syllabic Cree, to various of his flock whom I might meet along the way. With the dogs howling and straining and leaping to their trace ends my drivers made a hurried inspection of the sledge load's

binding; then, waving the throng aside, unlimbered their long cracking lash, and we were away, helter-skelter, to the embankment edge and half tumbling to the river ice below.

From where our course lay, far out on the ice at sea, we often sighted tepee smoke spiralling above some sheltered little wood. The team, when they gained the scent, would race madly toward it, plunge over the jagged tidal ice in full career, and burst into the encampment clearing only to engage with the Indians' dog army in a mêlée of fighting. The inhabitants, appearing from tepee entrances with sticks, whips, or snowshoes, or whatever they could throw, added to the din in their efforts at separation. The fighting over, they would lend a hand with my luggage and bundle me into some cracking firelit tepee interior. The housewives, vying with one another, would scurry about to fetch me clean spruce-bough bedding, to dust the snow from my fur with their willow brooms, to heap fresh fuel upon the fire, to fetch in clean snow for the "tea snow melting," and so on down to the last detail concerning my comfort their watchful eyes could see.

The hunters from the other tepees would crawl in after the meal and lounge with us within the red light of the great evening fire. They would have me believe that they merely came for a yarn or two with my drivers and news of encampments and the post, but I could see from their appraising glances that what concerned them most was myself—why I came and whither I was bound. My driver's reply that I was making this long journey for no other purpose than to see an island of "iron rocks" far north in the "raw meat eaters" land sent them into peals of laughter. The ex-

MAP OF UNGAVA PENINSULA LABRADOR

INCORPORATING THE LATEST SOURCES

MR. FLAHERTY'S 1ST TRIP BY POVUNGNITUK and PAYNE RIVERS WESTWARD BY CANOE JUNE – JULY 1912

MR. FLAHERTY'S 2nd TRIP BY LAKE MINTO and LEAF RIVER H EASTWARD by DOG SLEDGE MARCH-APRIL 1912

HUDSON STRAIT

HUDSON BAY

UNGAVA BAY

DISCOVERY ISLANDS

BAFFIN ISLAND

Digges Is.
C. Wosternholme
Lat & Long. of ● - 62°25' N. 77°14' W.
Lat. & Long. of ▲ - 62°15' N. 75°28' W.
on Naval Service of Canada Chart 404, Feb. 1913
Charles I.
C. Weggs
Big Island
Sugluk Bay
Deception Bay
Douglas Harbor
C. Wales
Wakeham Bay
Kovik R.
Kovik
Mansfield I.
C. Smith
Mosquito Bay
Ungwa
C. Hopes Advance
Akpatok Island
Povungnituk R.
Povungnituk L.
Povungnituk Bay
Gilmore I.
Ottawa Islands
Payne R.
Payne Bay
Payne Lake
Kogaluk L.
Kogaluk R.
Ivanko Bay
Leaf Bay
Leaf River
Portland Promontory
Port Harrison
Hopewell Is.
Pt. Chimo H.B.Co. Post
Koksoak River
Sleeper Is.
Nastapoka Is.
Approximate northern limit of trees
Lake Minto
Larch R.
Bakers Dozen Is.
Nastapoka R.
Lower Seal Lakes
Richmond Gulf
Clearwater Lake
Stillwater R.
Belcher Islands
H.B.Co. Post
Little Whale R.
Great Whale R.
H.B.Co. Post

1. Map of Labrador Peninsula, 1:1,584,000, NW sheet. Rept. L, by A. P. Low, Ann. Rept. Geol. Survey of Canada, Vol. 8, 1895.
2. Map of the coasts of Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay, 1:1,584,000. Repts. L, by A. P. Low, and M, by Robert Bell, ibid., Vol. 11, 1898.
3. Geological map of . . . northeastern . . . Canada to illustrate the report on the cruise of the D. G. S. Neptune to Hudson Bay and the Arctic islands, by A. P. Low, 1:3,168,000. Geol. Survey of Canada, Ottawa, 1906.
4. Geological map of the east coasts of Hudson Bay and James Bay, 1:506,880. Sheets I and II. Rept. D, by A. P. Low, Ann. Rept. Geol. Survey of Canada, Vol. 13, 1900. [Lower Kogaluk R. corrected.]
5. Blue-print map of Gilmour Island, Ottawa Islands, by Capt. A. Murray of the whaler Active. 1:50,000 approx. 1912.
6. Map of the Belcher Islands by R. J. Flaherty, 1:1,500,000. Geogr. Rev., Vol. 5, No. 6 (June, 1918), Pl. IV.
7. Route survey (1) by R. J. Flaherty, 1:506,880, adjoining.
8. Do. (2), adjoining.
9. Sketch map of the northern portion of the Labrador Peninsula from exploratory surveys by A. P. Low and Eskimo sketches collected in 1899-1900, 1:3,168,000. Rept. D, by A. P. Low, Ann. Rept. Geol. Survey of Canada, Vol. 13, 1900.

Scale 1:3150000

25 0 25 50 75 100 miles

(NOTE: *A detail map of the routes covered by these two trips may be found in* The Geographical Review, *Vol. VI, No. 2, 1918, Pl. VII*).

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planation that from the "iron rocks" are made their guns, knives, and axes, was of no avail, for the making of such inexplicable things they link with a higher power and let it go at that.

We all slept as one large family, men, women, cradled babes, and children in a circle about the fire, sometimes to be wakened by the wail of some restless child, or by the torrent of imprecations when some wolf-muzzled brute, having chewed a hole through the tepee door, made a desperate sally upon the larder. The vents in the tepee's cone were large enough (one could see patches of starlit sky beyond) to clear the smoke pall from the dying fire and keep us in cold, fresh air.

Gradually, as we drew out of the Indian's country, the forests gave way to dwarfed and more straggled clumps of trees, and the monotony of the low-lying coast was broken abruptly by a westward sweep of snow-smoking, kettle-shaped hills—the peninsula of Cape Jones—the beginning of the semi-barrens of the Eskimo.

We had an up-hill and down-dale journey of it over the Cape—up long steep hills that our tired team could hardly climb, or coasting in wild career and galloping over the disks of tiny lakes that lay between. On the crest of the last high hill, from my drivers came the exclamation, "Huskies!" (Eskimos) and I made out three squares of yellow light within the deepest hollow of the hills.

Three men, their wives, and a troop of wide-eyed children who looked like young bear cubs in their shaggy fur clothing came out to meet us as we galloped down toward them. They were all of them post-trained Eskimos, as their in-

congruous combination of trade clothes and native fur costumes bespoke—native deerskin parkas, the traders' moleskin trousers, sealskin boots, and trade caps, much too small for their bulging crops of hair. The women wore native trousers of deerskin and parkas of trade cloth edged with red, blue, and yellow tapes with pewter beads and spoons and large Canadian pennies dangling and jingling from the ends of them. One woman—but this was sheer opulence—wore over her shaggy fur trousers a tattered skirt of gingham.

With one Wetunik, headman of the encampment, my drivers arranged for a new relay, two Eskimos, sledge, and dogs for me, and within the hour turned back for the nearest Indian camp to southward. Though a stranger in a strange land, for I could speak no Eskimo, I experienced less inconvenience than might be imagined, so much can one do by way of signs, pantomime, and waving arms. The whole encampment—men, women, and children—turned to, to help me make camp, some cutting wood from the stunted spruces near by, others helping with the tent stakes and lashing canvas. All was soon snug and secure and my camp-stove fire vomited sparks out into the night. Beans and bacon were frying on the stove, and my eiderdown was unrolled on the tent's snow floor and spread over robes of deerskin. Wetunik and his wife lent a hand with the cooking, which, though it was done by signs and gestures, drove away the loneliness of dining alone. Their enjoyment of supper and of a long smoke afterward, expressed in grunting, smiles, and many sighs, was eloquent of the lean condition of their larder, and when I loaded the paunches of their kooletahs with

sea biscuit and tobacco, they could only smile their thankfulness and trudge away through the drift to their own camp near by to call out to their waiting family, "Nucky" (food), not halfway over.

With every mile on from the camp of the Eskimos, the country became more rugged and more barren. Great soilless slopes of rock tumbled down to sea from a horizon of increasingly higher hills. Such trees as grew in pockets and ice-gouged hollows seemed to be no larger than potted plants. There was little game—here and there a ptarmigan or a white fox skulked toward the ice edge out at sea, or, sometimes, like a gull in the wake of a ship a lone raven followed our trail.

Great Whale, the last north post, was from Fort George eight days away. Sundown on Christmas Day was our twelfth day of sledging, and still no post could we see. Darkness came. The wind was bitterly cold. Long since I had given up hope of reaching the post that night. Shelter and scalding tea was all that I could think of, when the sledge shot out upon a sheet of black glare ice. It was the river ice of the Great Whale. A single square of yellow light shone like a beacon through the darkness.

A long gaunt figure clad in a hooded capote stalked down, lantern in hand, to greet us. He was Harold, the post's half-Indian, half-Swede interpreter. When I stepped within the glare of his lantern light, the effect for the moment must have been that of an apparition, for a strange white man in this country, at this season, was unheard of. I followed him to his cabin, a snug little place, snow-walled to the eaves. A great two-decked stove, its side glowing red, centred the single large deal-panelled room. An old frayed calendar, a

few missionary lithographs, and some firearms hung on the wall.

Groups of Eskimos utterly silent and staring whenever my eyes were turned away, stood back to walls around me, and old Harold's wife, who for all her white-man's shoes and dress of flowered calico, was an Eskimo, crouched before the stove. Old Harold sat beside her, embarrassed and ill at ease, gazing into space and silent save when I questioned him. All of this to the lash of snow against the cabin walls, the dogs' mournful howls, and the drifters' unending drone.

III

WITH one Nero, old Harold's interpreter, and a post-servant Eskimo, and a spanking twelve-dog team, the last hundred and fifty miles of my trip began. More bold and rugged coast flanked the way. We often crawled within shadow lengths of cliffs that rose straight up from sea. The desolation grew with every mile, and native camps were few and wide apart. The days were cold, the sledge runners scrunched over snow as dry and as gritty as sand, and the low ground drift plastered white the muzzles of the team.

Nero was famed far and wide as one of two—the other was his brother "Husky Bill"—who could speak, albeit in pidgin fashion, a few words of English. Our common language made for an intimacy between us. He constituted himself my special bodyguard. On drifting days when to bare my hands to fill and light a pipe was much too cold, he performed that office for me. He was master of the grub box and sleeping bag. With his teeth he pulled off my boots of sealskin, at turning-in time at night, and was master of ceremonies generally at every camp along the way.

Gulf Hazard, three days on, marked the end of trees; so we put in to a last little grove and took on wood for a last wood-fire meal at noon. We moved slowly, bending into a thick, drifting wind. All, save the black rock masses of the slopes of coast which loomed through veils of drift, was white

desolation. We veered close into the coast as night approached, on the watch for a camp ground within the shelter of some little cove or embankment arm, when, as we rounded a point, the dogs started baying, and from Nero came the word "Innuet." There was a momentary respite from the blur of drift, and I barely made out the domes of a village of snow houses.

From the black voids of igloo tunnel mouths came shaggy beings on hands and knees and the bounding forms of dogs. Leather-faced as I was, and dressed as were the men, the Eskimo took me, for the moment, to be one of their own kind, but when they found their mistake there was a peal of laughter, and peering close, they wrung my hand again, with unintelligible exclamations the while as to the novelty that Nero had brought amongst them.

On hands and knees through a low tunnel I followed Nero who, whip-butt in hand, cowed the dogs as we brushed them by, and within twenty feet squeezed through a door into a large igloo dome. The housewife, her naked babe nestled warmly in the depths of her kooletah hood, turned from the trimming of her seal-oil lamp which lit the white cavern with a feeble yellow cast, and welcomed us. Her babe, too, poked out its tiny naked arm for the hand-shaking.

A frozen seal carcass which lay on the snow floor, a nest of yelping puppies in a niche of the igloo wall, willow mats, and robes of bear and deerskin were the igloo's furnishings.

A supply of black plug tobacco, needles, and bright-coloured trade candy was a principal part of my outfit to be given as presents to our various hosts along the way. Nero, of course, officiated on occasions when the presents were

given out—"sweetie-give-'em" was his name for it, which at this camp obtained the proportions of a small festival.

The result of "sweetie-give-'em"—flinging handfuls to the scrambling, squealing throng, upended, their seal-booted legs thrashing air—attracted the grown-ups from the igloos adjoining and packed our igloo full. The odour of skin clothes and seal-oil lamp became increasingly intolerable until Nero, noticing my distress, shooed them out into the open again, explaining diplomatically that "Angarooka" (the white master), "him sick nose!"

Five days in all I spent prowling about the iron-bearing cliff faces of the islands which I had come all this way to examine. Breaking off rock samples here and there and taking close-up photographs in the acid month of January were not pleasant tasks, but less pleasant still was the fact that the result of all my examination showed that the supposed deposits of iron ore of the Nastapokas were too hopelessly lean to be of the slightest economic importance. I had to face the fact that all the long journey had been for nothing.

Discouraged, I was on the point of starting back for camp in order to pack and strike off south again over the gulf of 600 miles that stood between me and the Ground Hog frontier, when Nero pointed out to sea over leagues and leagues of ice that lay before us to a horizon of gray-black rime, ponderously spiralling. "Big land over there," he said and added, explaining the source of his information, "Husky, him say so."

In a moment, Wetalltok, the Eskimo of Charlton Island, sprang to mind; and I remembered the details of a certain

day when Johnny Miller, the Company's interpreter, Wetalltok, and I were gathered around the latter's old sea chest of curios.

"Yes, sir," Johnny had said, nodding toward Wetalltok, "he is full of stories of the North, sir. All the time he is talking of his hunting ground and how long 'tis since he's seen it; and 'tis a long time, I do know, for he's been here eighteen years with me."

"But where does he come from—the Great Whale Coast?" I asked, hoping he might have information of the country whither I was bound.

"No, 'tis islands, sir, he says, far off from the Great Whale Coast at sea."

Then for a long time Wetalltok had talked to Johnny in Eskimo. "He has been telling me things about them islands, sir," said Johnny when the conversation ended.

"Where are these islands?" said I in idle curiosity, pulling out my travelling map. Wetalltok scanned it long and earnestly, at a loss, I thought, to understand; but finally he pointed to the little dots of land marked on the chart as the Belchers. "An' queer it is, sir," said Johnny, interpreting, "but he says the white man makes his islands small enough."

Then from a litter, odds and ends of tools, old carvings of ivory, harness toggles, harpoon heads, and the like, Wetalltok drew out an old coloured lithograph, tattered and torn. On the back of it, in pencil and crudely drawn, was a map, obviously handiwork of his own. "He says these is the real islands, sir," said Johnny as Wetalltok spread it out before me. "Here is his old winter sealin' ground," as Wetalltok pointed to the spot, "and here," he continued, still interpret-

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THE HUNTER

Eskimo in the rough ice fields at sea

ing, "is where he hunted walrus, two days' kayakin' farther north."

"Two days by kayak!" said I in astonishment. "How many miles, Johnny, do you think Wetalltok could go in two days?"

"Well, sir," said Johnny, "the seventy miles from here to Moose would be easy travellin', sir."

Seventy miles! I scanned the map. "Good Lord, if that is true, here are islands that must be a hundred miles long."

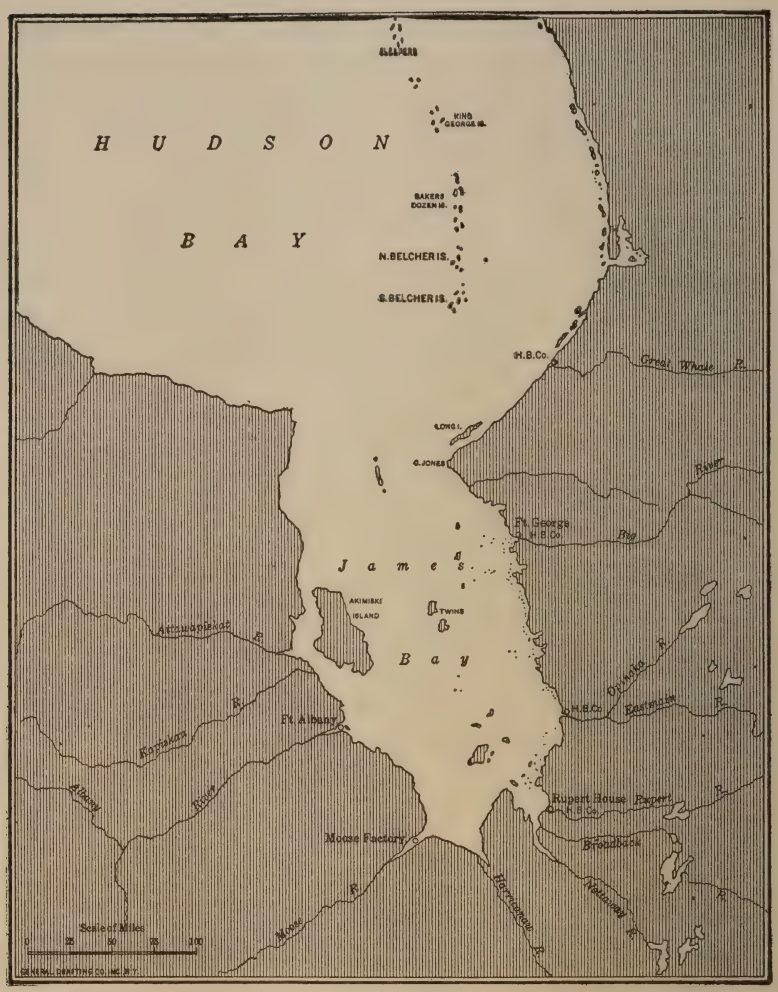
"Yes, sir," said Johnny, in his most non-committal manner.

Wetalltok, carefully weighing his words, went on:

Here was the country where the geese nested in spring, and where, during the summer days when the geese had shed their wing feathers and were unable to fly, he and his family used to capture them by running them down. Here in another place was the bear country, where bears were many when the icefields broke up in spring, and here (pointing to groups of little outlying islands) were the rookeries of sea pigeons and eiders that were many—they made clouds in the sky. "And here"—as Wetalltok pointed to what I supposed, since it was so extraordinarily large, must be an indentation of the sea—"is where he caught the rare freshwater seal and made his salmon kills. 'Tis a lake, sir," said Miller; "that is, he says so, sir."

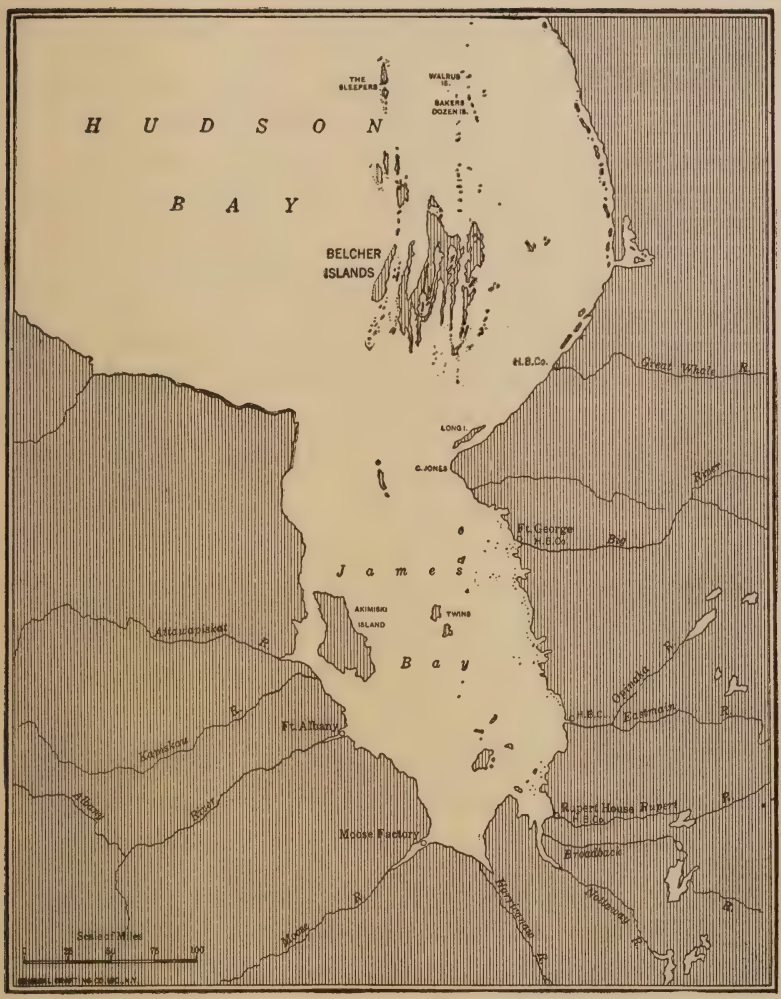
Then for an interval Wetalltok talked in Eskimo to Johnny Miller. Finally Miller continued: "He says, sir, from the south end, and looking north, the lake is like the sea—no land, just water, and then the sky."

If Wetalltok had told me that some sea serpent had sud-



HUDSON BAY AND THE FICTIONARY BELCHER ISLANDS

As they were shown on the Admiralty charts. This depiction was made by Captain Coates, a famous shipmaster in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1700, and continued to appear on the Admiralty charts up to the present day.



HUDSON BAY AND THE REAL BELCHER ISLANDS

As they were shown to be by Mr. Flaherty. For two hundred and fifty years the once-a-year fur ships of the Hudson's Bay Company had been sailing within a few miles of this archipelago with no idea of its size.

denly risen from the sea, picked him up and carried him to some little island, and then tenderly and carefully launched him in the tip-top of some waving tree, his story could hardly have seemed more absurd. What! Not only islands, Heaven knows how long, but on one of them a lake with a horizon like the sea; and all this mass of land occupying an Admiralty-charted water, where were plotted deep-sea soundings and multitudes of mere dots of islands! How could such a tale possibly be true? Why, the deep-sea ships of the Hudson's Bay Company through a period of more than two centuries must have passed along not far from them!

Wetalltok had given me his map, and I had accepted it merely as a memento of a picturesque liar of the broad north country. But now Nero's mention of these strange islands struck me as being more than a coincidence, and I determined on my return to Great Whale to sift the source of Nero's information and satisfy myself once for all as to the truth of Wetalltok's strange tale.

We were two weeks on the return to Great Whale, encountering the worst weather and the hardest travel of the year. For four days on end we were marooned on an island while the sea ice, broken, whilst we slept, from its fastening along the coast, sailed out to sea before a driving nor'easter. When the wind from the west blew it in again, it came in broken pans and rafted fields. Some dog or other kept falling between the floes as we picked our way along. Hauling them out amid a din of howls, drying feet, and while Nero pinioned the snapping heads, freeing their toes of small cutting particles of ice, what with the cold and drift, were, as Nero said, "Damn hard time."

Old Harold shook his head doubtfully when I finished my tale of Wetalltok's map and Nero's story. "We see some of them islanders every year," said Harold, "when they come in over the sea ice to trade, and none of them says what monsters is them islands, sir."

I started on a new tack. "How many Eskimos live on the island?" Harold hesitated for a long while, then engaged Nero and his servants in conversation and began counting up the heads of island families that in years gone by had traded at Great Whale. Finally came the answer, "Not less than one hundred and fifty all told."

"Do you think, then," said I, "that a hundred Eskimos could hunt their way, year in and year out, on any but a large mass of land? For," I added, "between Cape Jones and Gulf Hazard, a distance of two hundred miles, there are hardly more than one hundred and fifty Eskimos, and you know the fight they have for game."

To make a long story short, Harold was inclined to believe that in Wetalltok's map and story there might be something more than fiction. For the succeeding two days he closely questioned the Eskimos of all the countryside, and the sum of the information thus gained, though vague and broken, gave more than a hint of corroboration.

Down over the sea ice to Moose Factory, and on up the frozen Moose, within two months, I reached the "line," and the last of the eleven hundred miles of journeying was over. Conviction of the truth of Wetalltok's strange tale had grown with every mile.

IV

THE northern boundary of the tremendously important iron-ore field of northern Minnesota is, roughly speaking, the boundary between the United States and Canada. For years after the opening up of these fabulous deposits, extensions were explored for on the Canadian side. It seemed a foregone conclusion that such were bound to occur. For the last twenty-five years, however, thousands of square miles throughout northern Ontario have been explored in vain. The writer's father, as representative of one of the large operating companies in Minnesota, carried on a large part of this exploration. We found in the boulder débris along various parts of this Height of Land, iron ore float similar in character to some of the Minnesota ores. In one region we found it in such quantities that extensive explorations were undertaken through the surrounding country in an attempt to locate the body of it in the ground. The source was never found. When, however, I examined the ores on the Nastapokas, I recognized at once that they and the float that I had seen years before were identical.[1]

[1]Dr. C. K. Leith, who is a well-known authority on the geology of northern Minnesota and Michigan, made his examination of the Nastapokas during the summer preceding my own journey. His monograph gives an excellent description of the island formations; his conclusions, offered tentatively owing to the limited time he had for investigation, he summarizes as follows:

"From an economic standpoint the repetition of essentially Lake Superior conditions in the Hudson Bay country cannot but be of interest . . . when it is remembered that the enormous deposits of iron, copper, nickel, and cobalt on the south side of the Archæan protaxis are, with very few exceptions, associated with Algonkian rocks, and late Algonkian at that, rather than with Archæan rocks. There are yet no discoveries to warrant close

Though I had found nothing of economic interest in the iron-ore measures of the Nastapokas, the information which I had received from Wetalltok, the Eskimo, that to seaward of the Nastapokas, "two days' fast sledging over the sea ice," were a group of islands which, if he spoke the truth, were incredibly large, was in itself interesting enough as an inducement for exploration. But that which made it doubly interesting was a certain statement I found in a geological report upon my return to Lower Canada. The statement was part of a report, dated 1884, of Dr. Robert Bell, to the effect that when in Nastapoka country he had received from Eskimos who had come in from the islands out at sea fragments of rock which led him to believe that the rock system of these islands was similar to that of the Nastapokas.[1]

If Doctor Bell's surmise was correct and Wetalltok's statement was anywhere near the truth—discounting it by half, the land mass he described could in area be not less than 2,000 square miles—here was work to do.

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commercial comparison of the two regions. — "An Algonkian Basin in Hudson Bay—A comparison with the Lake Superior Basin," *Econ. Geology*, 1910 vol. V, pp. 227—46; reference on p. 246.

[1]Robert Bell: "Observations on the Geology, Zoölogy and Botany of Hudson's Strait and Bay, made in 1885," Report DD of *Annual Rept. Geol. Survey of Canada*, vol. I for 1885, Montreal, 1885, p. 14.

A. P. Low in one of his reports refers to a projected exploration of the Belcher Islands that was not carried out. Probably he, too, had received interesting information from the natives concerning them. The reference is of interest as evidence of the ice conditions that may obtain in the bay during the summer months.

"At Great Whale River we were again delayed by ice until the 7th of July, when we were advised by all the Eskimos to abandon our proposed trips to the Belcher Islands, which lie about seventy miles off the coast and about which, owing to the prevalence of westerly winds during the early summer, the ice would be very thick. This advice proved correct as the Hudson's Bay Company's ship, *Lady Head*, was beset with heavy ice as far south as Bear Island in James Bay, where the ice was left on the 20th of August."

Probably, also, he had in mind Doctor Bell's remarks on certain rock specimens supposed to have been broken from the fixed rocks of the Belchers and his belief that these specimens indicated the extension to the Belchers of the Nastapoka series.

To explore Wetalltok's islands, then, was the object of a second expedition. At Moose Factory I secured the diminutive 36-foot *Nastapoka* and engined her with a motor we had canoed and packed down from the frontier.

By the time we had journeyed up the east coast to Great Whale River, the season was well advanced. Moreover, among the Eskimos of Great Whale the *Nastapoka* did not inspire confidence. They looked askance at the fire-spitting, rifle-cracking innards of the craft. Much bargaining, tempting offers, good old Harold's "fur trade" support, and Nero's argument that "all same noise like gun never mind, scare 'em seal, that's all," finally overcame their prejudices.

Old Harold celebrated the day we left—the Company's standard flew from the flagpole and Eskimo half-breed servants and groups of children lined the rim of the river's high bank, as we, far below them, scooted like a water bug out toward the sea.

Swinging up along the bold flanks of the coast, for three calm sunlit days we cruised happily along. Seals innumerable popped their heads through the glass around us, and there were whirring flocks of ducks and eiders, so the crew had food in plenty and smiled their content.

At nightfall of the third day we reached the point—a small island outlying the Gulf Hazard mainland some five miles—from which I planned to strike out over the open sea for Wetalltok's islands. In the only harbour available, one exposed to all the winds save those blowing from the west, which then prevailed, we anchored for the night. But within the hour the wind chopped around and blew in upon

OFF FROM THE WINTERING BASE ON A SLEDGE TRIP
(BELCHER ISLANDS)

us from the north. The wind rose as black night settled down. We paid out all the anchor chain, hoping to hang on against morning. But the *Nastapoka*, her anchors dragging, was forced foot by foot toward shore. By midnight she was piled aground while breaking seas flushed gear and food from the cabin and open hold.

When daylight came the battered *Nastapoka* stood half heeled before us on the sands. We took stock of the wet and bedraggled state of our affairs. The Eskimos, their minds on food, combed the beach. As they were out of sight for some little time I set out to find them. They were not far distant, huddled behind a group of boulders, bent double, their arms wrapped about their middles and in chorus groaning. Lying near them were the empty containers of a considerable quantity of dried apples upon which of course they had stuffed themselves and then—*drunk water!*

After three days of caulking, patching, and re-rigging the *Nastapoka's* running gear and mending torn and tattered sails, we limped on down to Great Whale Post. By the time we arrived the sailing season was over.

Then, said Nero, *he* would see me to Wetalltok's islands. With dogs and sleds, he said, we would cross over the ice-fields in winter, during the six weeks of February and March when the ice is immovable. We shook hands over it and agreed to wait until the "seeco [ice], him strong."

Before Nero and I could begin the journey, five months must elapse. I sounded Mavor, the factor, as to the possibility of wintering with him, but a rough inventory of his mess supply showed a meagre quantity of food barely sufficient for his own needs. So I prepared to travel 180 miles

south to more opulent Fort George. No "York" boat crew at this late season was obtainable. They feared being caught by the freeze-up on the way. The bruised and battered *Nastapoka* was useless. By canoe was the only way. Poor Mavor, in his eighth year of factorship at God-forsaken old Great Whale, was loath to see me go. He felt that he must go too if for nothing more than the change of scene; the loneliness he said was "getting" him. So he made old Harold his deputy, and we launched out in a post canoe for Fort George with a "You'll be froze in on the way, sir," from old Harold ringing in our ears.

Five and a half months later found me back again at Great Whale. Nero had come down a hundred miles from his hunting ground and was waiting. Harold, however, gave me disquieting news. The islanders' annual migration into the post for trade had not materialized—they were, he said, weeks overdue. "I doesn't understand it, sir," said he, "the huskies here says the ice is strong and holdin' all along the coast. But their not coming means there's something wrong with it somewhere, sir." Nero, however, explained the delay—"Seals, him not plenty. When seals him plenty, him come sure." Waiting in vain for the glimpse of black specks winding through the rough icefields out at sea, Nero and I decided finally to start, islanders or no islanders.

It was long after sleep-time. With all our plans settled for the following morning's departure, I pulled on my kooletah and prepared to trudge over to my own sleeping quarters and turn in. From out-of-doors came the din of howling and snarls and yells and yelps of fighting. A sledge or more

of natives had arrived. The door burst in and an old Eskimo, one Pitchalock, of Little Whale, brushing the drift from his deer-fur clothing, strode into the room. Drinking a pannikin of scalding tea, he rattled out unintelligible words the while—"seeco," "annohie," "komitik," "cukuktinnie." Eventually we gathered that three sleeps to northward the ice, broken, was driving out to sea. On one driving pan was a team of dogs entangled in their harnesses, the dogs of islanders. Harold surmised that they had been caught by the break-up on crossing over.

"'Tis bad luck you're havin', sir," said old Harold, "for in the twenty-eight years I have been here, 'tis only the second time the ice has broke."

When six months later I returned to Lower Canada, Sir William, with a persistence altogether characteristic, said, "Get a ship." This meant a Newfoundland schooner and crew and a cruise north along the Labrador and through Hudson Strait and south, this time along the upper half of the East Main of Hudson Bay. The topsail schooner *Laddie*, seventy-five feet over all and eighty-five tons net register, was purchased for the work.

The *Laddie* had been through Hudson Strait before. "But no glory to 'er," one of my crew informed me. "She had three mounted police aboard an' relief for the police post at Cape Fullerton, on the west side of the Bay. When she reached the Strait, what wasn't head wind was ice—big Fox Channel ice, miles and miles of it, swingin' out for the North Atlantic. By the time she cleared the ice September was come, an' there was more winds, head on. Well, sir,

she beat till she was almost in sight of the hungry post at Cape Fullerton. Then snow come, an' a heavy gale. She got a drubbin', sir. In four days she was near halfway back to the Strait. Says the skipper, 'Relief for Fullerton or no, the *Laddie* clears for Newfoundland.' And she did."

For four weeks the *Laddie*, in dock, was re-rigged and overhauled from bow to stern, and belted with greenheart to shield her from the ice. When we had stuffed and crammed and stowed away our outfit in her hold she stood burdened to the rails, with lumber for winter huts, oil—fifty barrels of it in nets lashed together—and the long winter's coal in bags piled high. Our fresh beef and bags of vegetables swung from the rigging and ladder-ways.

The old sea dogs who for days had been hanging about the wharf predicted as the time dragged on that we were "o'er late to go pokin' up through Hudson Strait." O'er late we were, but at last the great day, the 14th of August, came. With a chantey, the crew winched the anchors to the rails. There were salutes from the fishing craft around. A pompous little tug made fast our hawser, and slowly towed us through the bottle neck of St. John's Harbour. Forests of masts and long fingers of wharves, our last sight of civilization slowly panoramed from view, and as the friendly tug let go our hawser and stepped aside, we rolled out into the long swells of the North Atlantic.

From the mild blue skies of Newfoundland, within the fortnight we were a thousand miles to northward running close-hauled through squalls of snow into the mouth of Hudson Strait. The giant cliffs of Resolution, rising sheer from a white lash of sea, were our first sight of land north

of Labrador. From Resolution into the bare rock flanks of the Strait's north coast, Baffin Land, the days were fair enough, light catspaws of wind and gray snowy-looking skies. Here and there bergs of gigantic size sailed proudly with the tide. Streams of emerald cascaded over their flanks. Strata of gulls stood etched against the gray-white immensity of their walls.

On from the "saddle-backs," the smooth rounded mass of coast with its clean, long, curving lines of shore gave way to broken, erratic sweeps masked by multitudes of little high rock islands. Washed by enormous tides, at flood whole groups of them were reefs or under sea. "No water for an honest ship, sir," said the skipper. Carefully sounding our way, we crawled into a nest of islands for the night's shelter. We threw both anchors into the good mud bottom of a little island's enfolding arms, into what the lead line showed was seven fathoms fore and aft. All hands but the watch turned in to sleep. The night was still. No breath of wind. The aurora raked to and fro across the sky. I was still awake when the watch, clattering to the companionway, bawled, "She's grounding, sir!" While we held our lanterns overhead and tried to peer down into the darkness, she slowly began heeling until she lay on her beam-ends, high and dry. The deck load, lumber, coal, and casks of oil, I feared, would slide through the bulwarks; but unable to see, all we could do was to cling through the night to the rigging and ladders of the upper rail. When at last daylight came, we found that the *Laddie* was berthed in a cushion of soft mud and ooze. A reef, over which her back would have broken had she stranded there, lay less than ten feet away.

We zigzagged in our attempts to beat through the five hundred miles of Strait, from the island mask of Baffin Land, south to the sheer thousand-foot coast of Cape Hope's Advance and Wakeham Bay, for the winds and squalls of snow were baffling. Too late to gain a wintering base in the Bay, we put into Amadjuak Bay three hundred and fifty miles in on the coast of Baffin Land. Here with the aid of some forty Eskimos, enthusiastic over the advent of the "kablunak," with his precious stores and goods for trade, ship was discharged by dories and kayaks of the Eskimos catamaraned. Where they disgorged on rocky ledges of shore, old men, women with babes bobbing in their hoods, and children of assorted sizes in an antlike stream, packed boxes, bales, and bundles over the rocks to the wintering base site. Within a week a village of topeks (tents of sealskin) along with four white wedges of tents of canvas and, in the centre of them all, our hut of white lumber roofed with black tar paper stood looking out over the bare rock desolation.

By the last week of September my three men and I were settled for the year and the good old *Laddie*, just the day before the first skin ice formed over the harbour's face, sailed slowly out, bound for her winter berth in Newfoundland.

Through the ten months of winter we had enough to do. There were two thousand miles of sledging along the coast and reconnaissances inland to the great lake of Amadjuak. There, too, was the task of filming as much as might be of the lives of the Eskimos. But all of this is another story.

When the winter had finally worn away, through the long light of warm July days we watched each new patch of

blue-green water where it shone resplendent among the white waste of the icefields at sea. But of signs of a break-up there were none. Even when August came, Eskimos, bringing us the eggs of gulls and eiders, were sledging still over the ice from distant lands. "The summer is slow in coming," they said, and they worried over it too, for the

ROUTE OF THE SCHOONER *LADDIE*

From St. John's to Moose Factory the trip took more than a year. Because of the late start, Mr. Flaherty and his party were forced to winter at Amadjuak Bay, sending the *Laddie* back to St. John's. The following summer the schooner returned. She was nearly crushed in an ice pack, but escaped and picked up the party at Amadjuak Bay, continuing toward the Belcher Islands. She was wrecked in a fog, but managed to get off the rocks at high tide, and made a landing on the Belchers. Her condition was so bad, however, that she was taken to Moose Factory for repairs, delaying the real work of exploration until the next summer.

time of their summer migration along the coast was near at hand.

Not until the tenth day of August did we waken to see, where so long had lain the great white waste of ice, the blue-green of open sea. To the highest hill of the harbour's mouth I sent one of our families of Eskimos to encamp, to signal us with a moss-fire smoke as soon as the *Laddie* hove in view.

The summer was nearly gone when on the nineteenth of August the *Laddie* sailed in to our relief. Hemmed in by ice along Labrador, for nearly two months she had been en route. "We was nipped in Grey Straits, sir," he continued, "what with the ice raftin' an' pilin' up around us an' a-squeezin' so. Ne'er a door would open. Even the fuel tank to the starboard was busted. I thought it would raft to the yardarms. With 'lasses and hardtack and matches in a bottle and fuel and a bit of clothin', charts, and a compass we unlimbered the dories and made off on an ice pan and stood there listenin' to 'er timbers creakin' and groanin' and the thuddin' of the ice pilin' and pilin' up around her. I turned to figurin' out how we could haul the dories over the ice to open water. I climbed some rafted ice to get a sight for a course through it when right before me eyes I saw a lead of blue water, and widenin' as I watched it. 'Twas the tide on the turn, sir, and I knew that once more I'd be climbin' up over the *Laddie's* rail. And sure enough the ice slackened off, sir, and we was away two hours on with a bone in our teeth."

Within a week we were ready to sail, bound at last for Wetalltok's mysterious land. The wintering base now dismantled was a forlorn and empty shell. To the faithful and

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ESKIMO OMIAK IN THE SPRING

kindly Eskimos who had served us so well, we gave out the last we had—a mirror with a gilt frame, old blankets, clothing, old shoes, precious bits of metal, and an old alarm clock with one hand, knives, old pots and kettles and pans, and most wonderful of all, some oranges from the *Laddie*—"peeruwalluk pumwa" (the very best of all that is sweet), they said. Enraptured, they rubbed them against their noses.

We said our good-byes regretfully enough. Anxiously they inquired if ever they should see us again. I had not the courage to be definite on that point; I knew that when summer again rolled around they would climb to the highest hill, hopeful for a sight of us.

V

WE HAD clear water through the Straits, for the migration of the icefields to the North Atlantic from Hudson Bay had long since passed. Following the snow-capped cliffs of Wolstenholme which lean a thousand feet down to sea, we turned into Hudson Bay. Within thirty miles the giant blocks of coast had stepped down to a mere thread of land apparently no higher than the scattered ice pans which drifted by at sea. The only break in a hundred miles of its monotony was the brow of Cape Sir Thomas Smith still alight with the last yellow flood of a big, drowsy ball of sun.

On the third day we hit the Ottawas, the northernmost of the groups of islands which, as the maps show, parallel the East Main for a distance of some four hundred miles. Along the line of this group, south some two hundred miles, we hoped to find Wetalltok's land. Black barren masses of volcanic rock are the Ottawas. There is not even the tawn and russet of the mosses to relieve their bleak desolation. As we wore into the coast, the mate climbed to the crow's-nest on a lookout for a break ahead which might lead into a harbour. Flocks of eiders from rock ledges of the shore rose in alarm as we approached, and in whirring flights circled us. The screams of gulls were constantly in the air. A herd of walrus, holding to the edge of a drifting ice pan with their gleaming tusks, let go and with a resounding splash dived from view.

Suddenly the mate's bawling, "Man ahead, sir," brought us with a rush to the ladder-ways. In a moment more we stood abreast of a yawning mouth of harbour and before us stood a ship riding at anchor, beyond it, on shore, a hut, and beside it a flag mast from which a Union Jack was breaking out upon the wind.

The *Active* she proved to be, one of the veteran whalers of Dundee. Having completed her winter and summer whaling, she was about to clear again for Scotland. Both the winter and summer, they said, had been hard—little chance for whales. The winter was one of constant gales and nearly all the summer through they had been hemmed in by vast fields of ice. They were on the last legs of their rations; one of the crew, with a drawn and doleful face, begged of me whatever "soft" food I might have—"oatmeal and the like, sir"—then showed me a toothless pair of gums.

"Do you mean to tell me," said I, "that you had the hardihood to leave Scotland without a tooth in your head?"

"No, sir," said he, "but you know how it is, sir, a few drinks before you leave and then the wee bit of an upset the day after, sir, what with the ship's rollin' an' all; so to tell you the truth, sir, I heaved them over the rail, sir!"

During the winter two of the ship's harpooners had died of delirium tremens. The last trace we saw of the *Active* as we swung off for the south were two wooden crosses, grim silhouettes against the sky.

Icefields lay not far from us. All day long an ice "blink" loomed in the west. "If the wind swings, 'tis fog we'll be havin', sir," the skipper said. And sure enough by morning great banks of it lay around us. As the day wore on, how-

ever, it thinned to a milky haze, but notwithstanding, we almost bumped into one low-worn rib of rock. On an hour farther, though there was no land in view, we looked down through the emerald to the bouldery bottom of the shoals. Carefully for three days we crept on. Some one of the crew was constantly in the crow's nest and the leadsman stood always ready in the bow. We had no suns for latitude, but at nightfall the log showed a southing from the Ottawas of two hundred miles—we were at last in the neighbourhood of Wetalltok's islands.

"But we might as well be in the neighbourhood of a reef or two, what with this fog and all," was the captain's observation. "We ought to be up and out of it, sir, to a snug harbour until it comes clear again. 'Tis one thing we know, sir—the mainland is to east'ard and no more nor seventy miles with a harbour waiting us. With no sun for sights and only a log and dead reck'nin' clean down from the Ottawas and tides playin' hell with us the while—why, as 'tis, sir, we're nowhere."

So we squared away before a light wind and laid a course through the night, the captain cheerful over the prospect of what he called the "tender arms" of a harbour before morning. The timid piping of the wind, the rattle of blocks along the boom, and the monotone of a song from the helmsman were the only sounds.

"Well, sir," said the skipper finally, looking up from his game of solitaire on the cabin table, "delay or no, it's lucky we're gettin' clear of it all. We'll be ridin' at anchor by mornin' in a fine, fine——" when *crash! bang!* we pitched in a heap to the floor.

A wild ground-swell broke over the stern, picked up the *Laddie* and hurled her with thuds that sent the lamps, the charts, telescopes, guns, and shelf-loads of crockery crashing to the floor, into the teeth of a boiling reef. The rifle-like cracking of sails, the hiss and slosh and din of breaking seas, and the pounding of the *Laddie* up and down, up and down—I thought the spars and rigging would rattle out of her. When we peered down over the rails to nests of boulders and the wash of seas, splinters the length of a man rose up and drifted off into the void. There was no launching the dories in that blackness, we could only hope the *Laddie* would hold till morning. "All hands to the hold!" sang out the captain, and we dug up her boulder ballast piece by piece and passing it through a chain of hands, dropped it over the rail. We stripped the *Laddie* to the skin, which heaved as her bottom struck the bar. We gave her up then and climbed to deck, provisioned the dories, and waited for dawn.

When dawn did come a blanket of fog lay around us. The wind, however, had died and the sea smoothed out to long rolls of glass. A blur of yellow burned through the milk of sky. In an hour the fog began melting away, and a half mile to starboard an island stood out through the dissolving mists. With the dories we put off, wallowing through the dying swells and on, sprawling on crests of surf, in to shore.

It was not much of an island—a level, soilless bed of rock, a mere platform rising out of sea. A ring of boulders at one place showed where long since had stood the topek of some wandering Eskimos. Near by was a seal-oil lamp which, fashioned out of a piece of driftwood, had been made in an

emergency and seemed to point to the fact that whoever had camped there had met with misadventure, perhaps the break-up of the ice while travelling on the icefields.

Caching among boulders all the freight of food and gear the dories had brought ashore, we returned to ship to take off the last odds and ends before we abandoned her. We found to our amazement that though the tide was near flood there was not much water in the well.

"By gad, sir," the skipper said, "though with my own eyes I saw enough splinters comin' up and floatin' off to make a raft, yet here she is, sir, dry as a bone. Not only that, sir, but if the tide come high, and it should, sir, what with all these winds blowin' from the one quarter, there's the chance that we can hobble her over the reef."

So to work we went with a will. Thirty-five casks of oil, all that remained of heavy cargo, we threw into the sea, then dropped an anchor some 300 feet ahead, put on all sails, and opened up the engine. With "heave-ho's" from the crew winding at the winch and "Now she comes, me byes, now she comes," from the skipper, slowly, inch by inch, the *Laddie* moved. The crew broke out into a chantey as she gathered way. "An alligator, I calls her," the skipper cried and called for a "mug up" for all hands. When a light breeze an hour on tore up the last shrouds of fog which had lain over us so long, it revealed the hole into which we had poked the *Laddie's* nose. The white boils of reefs were everywhere. In no direction could we see a single straight lane of water through which the *Laddie* could get out to open sea. I knew then that the reason we had not run aground was that a strong magnetic attraction had kept swinging the

compass by which the helmsman kept his course. Literally, the *Laddie* had wound her way into land.

"'Tis no place fur us, sir," said the skipper, and he hailed the mate and two of the crew who had gone off to the island for fresh water.

"We've seen big land, sir," they called as they clambered up over the rail, and explained that they had glimpsed it when they climbed a hill on the island.

"Big land?" says the skipper. "You means the mainland."

"Naw, sir," said the mate, "what land we seen lays to west'ard and there's sixty miles or more of it, for 'tis spread over nine points of the compass, sir."

We could see it from the rigging and of its identity there was no doubt; the blue loom which lay along the rim of that gray waste of sea could be no other than Wetalltok's land.

With the water casks hauled up and lashed into their cradles we were out of it soon enough. Before sundown (the log read twenty miles) we hove to off the northeastern portion of the new-found coast. Cautiously sounding, we crept through a bottle neck into a small rock-bound harbour. The clank and clangour of the anchor chains pouring out through the hawse pipes sent flocks of eiders a-whirring round us. A long string of geese honked wildly as they flapped awkwardly away. A gorgeous silver fox scurried into the crevices of a great pile of rocks.

Up over the moss carpet of a valley, a shallow groove in bare rock slopes, I climbed to a vantage-point from which, as far as the eye could see, north, south, and west, lay range upon range of hills. The valleys between them were moss-grown sweeps of tawn and russet strangely like cultivated

fields. Among them here and there were the green and silver disks of lakes and ponds, and between two distant jagged lines lay a long blue tongue of sea.

Not only in the red bands of marl and shale, and in the distant masses of yellow which were quartz sites, and in the white-grays which were limestones was the land mass, as I had hoped, an extension of the ore-bearing series of the mainland. Though it was barely exposed, I stumbled over ore itself—rich stuff which lay heavy in my hands!

But here we were, on the last legs of food and gear, with the ship almost broken down. The skipper said she was leaking badly, and what with the September gales and snow-storms which were near at hand we should be "up and out of it, headin' south with all the sail we has." For two days, however, in which the crew were busy overhauling sailing gear and ballasting ship, we made reconnaissances inland and south along the coast. We saw the blue rims of more new land, all of it made up of the black ribs of eruptives, the terra cotta and the red and white and yellow ribbons of the Nastapoka rocks. There was no sight of natives but the boulder rings of their old camp grounds were everywhere.

Reluctantly, at daylight of the third day, we put out for the south.

At Great Whale River Post, we received the first news, albeit it was two months old, of the great busy world outside. We picked up the mouth of the Great Whale too late to get in over the river bars to the post. With three of the crew, I unlimbered the launch but, confused by the darkness, whilst threading through the bars, we were caught by a sweep of surf and thrown up upon a narrow spit of sand. Up river,

ESKIMO HUNTING WALRUS
Drawn in pencil by an Eskimo.

a mile and a half away, shone two squares of yellow light, windows of one of the cabins of the post. Unable to see through the boils of surf, the mate lashed a lantern to a long pike pole, and as he waved it to and fro through the air, I fired round after round from my Winchester.

We waited there an hour but there was no response. Again we signalled, but with the same result. Not until the moon rose at midnight did we get clear. When we landed I glimpsed several forms flitting past the window lights and dissolving in the darkness. Puzzled, we climbed to the cabin and strode into a lighted but deserted room. Nearly half an hour we waited there, our surprise and curiosity mounting the while, when at last the familiar, long, lanky form of old Harold stood halting in the doorway. Recognizing me in a moment, his fear-beclouded face became wreathed in smiles. He reached out for my hand exclaiming, "My God, sir, I t'ote you was the Germans!" And so it was that we first heard of the great World War.

From Great Whale we sailed on down through James Bay and on through ship's channel into the nine-mile-wide delta of the Moose to Moose Factory; here the *Laddie* was made ready for the slipway where, through the winter, the crew and half-breed shipwrights of the post were to overhaul her. When everything was taken out and her cobble ballast thrown overboard, she filled to the engine room and would have sunk had it not been for the shoals over which she rode.

VI

THE first map of Hudson Bay, published in the year 1612, was based upon the notes of Hendrik Hudson, which were brought out in the year 1611 by the mutinous crew which cast him adrift to perish from exposure and starvation.

This map, strangely enough, shows three large islands lying between 56° and 60°, approximately the latitude of Wetalltok's islands. The identity of these islands was problematical and provoked much discussion. Burpee, for instance, in his chapter on the discovery of the Bay, speaking of Hudson's voyage and chart, says:

> The chart shows several large islands lying off the western coast of Hudson's Bay between 65° and 60°. From Roe's Welcome in the far north to the foot of James Bay only two large islands lie off the western coast, Marble Island and Akimiski. The former being out of the question, we are reduced to Akimiski. That convenient island seems to be a peg on which to hang every theory of the fourth voyage that defies other solution.[1]

Luke Fox, in the summer of 1631, sailed along the eastern coast. In about the latitude of the islands shown on Hudson's chart, he mentions the existence of certain islands, which he says Hudson named "Lancaster, his Isles." No trace of this name appears in any of Hudson's notes. Of the size and character of the islands, Fox gave no information.

[1] L. J. Burpee: "The Search for the Western Sea," New York, 1908.

They remained a mystery. And then in 1709 they disappear altogether from the charts, to be replaced by the depiction of island systems outlying the east coast given on the Admiralty charts—groups of small islands in dotted outline, the largest of them not ten miles across. These charts are based on the notes and maps of Captain Coats, who from 1727 to 1751 sailed in and out annually along the east coast of Hudson Bay.

Belchers Islands, four in number, lie forty-five leagues to westward of Little Whale River; by another account, only twenty-nine leagues in latitude 56° - 6′, where I was entangled three days in ice.

About seven leagues north from those is a range of islands twenty leagues in length, fourteen larger, and many smaller; the middle, in 58° 00 N. Latitude, at a distance of seventeen leagues from the east main, amongst which the Usquemows swarm all the summer months to catch fish and moulted fowl, in great abundance, upon all these, Belchers and Sleeper Islands.[1]

Strangely enough—when I last visited Great Whale River Coast in the *Laddie*—this was immediately following the first landing on the islands—there had been brought into the post, by one of the traders, as a curio from a far outpost east of Southern James Bay, an old copy of company correspondence—letters of Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and of his factors on the Bay, during the years 1846 and 1849. These letters contained, besides routine business matters, a project for sending to the Belcher Islands a half-breed servant of the company, Thomas Weigand, by name, with Eskimo companions.

[1]John Barrow, edit.: "The Geography of Hudson's Bay: Being the remarks of Captain W. Coats," etc., Hakluyt Soc. Publs., 1st series, London, 1852, vol. II, p. 66.

The letters relate how Weigand carried out this project. They are, however, altogether concerned with starting a fur trade on the Island; none of them ever gives any evidence as to either the Island's character or size.

Extracts from a letter from John Spencer, Fort George, dated January 8, 1849, to Jos. Gladman, Esq.:

. . . At all events he [Thomas Weigand] succeeded to accomplishing his visit to the Esquimaux Islands having neither met with obstructions from ice or shoals and when arrived there he met with the shelter and security of an excellent harbour, objects of no trifling consideration to the explorers of a strange coast—and although it so happened that he saw but few natives and got but little from them it would be highly ridiculous in endeavouring to make that appear as a sufficient reason for not going again, and that their poverty should for a moment be thought sufficient for framing such an idea, an idea in itself as absurd as it is ridiculous, and could only find shelter in a narrow mind, for after our knowledge of those islands, being more or less inhabited, and that those natives are living under no other protective hand than that which nature bestowed upon them, indifferent should we be considered in our endeavour towards bettering mankind, were we to show ourselves indifferent towards them. I think the three first objects above cited are a sufficient reason for future enterprise, even chilled as the minds of the crew were at the solitude of the place which in itself ought to form but a secondary consideration when exploring the regions of so inhospitable a portion of the coast—what is it to them whether the ground be covered with luxuriant verdure and everything around cheerful and pleasing, or for them to find it as they did, provided they are blessed with a good harbour when arrived there, and by concerting measures hereafter who knows but the inhabitants of these islands may be brought to furnish a valuable portion of trade in Blubber, Foxes, Ivory and whatnot—all such matters have yet to be tried, and if we cannot succeed it will then be time enough to relinquish the thing. At the present moment I have no doubt but they view the trip over there with a degree of unpleasantry altogether ideal.

That this estimable scheme for mutual benefit, however, was not to be realized is apparent from the fact that the islands so soon and so completely drop out of Hudson Bay tradition.

To the present generation of fur traders on the Bay, Wetalltok's tale was a myth, nor did they believe my first reports. Among some of the government officials at Ottawa, as well, these reports were nothing if not amusing. Where I claimed the existence of a great mass of land, they pulled out their Admiralty chart and showed me soundings!

PART II

WINTER ON WETALLTOK'S ISLANDS

WINTER ON WETALLTOK'S ISLANDS

I

"YES," said Johnny Miller, the interpreter, when I landed at Charlton Island, "Wetalltok says he'll go. He's that glad to see his own land once more, sir, an' all his friends an' relations what he hasn't laid eyes on these twenty years. An' he tells me, sir, he's real hungry for walrus an' seal an' huntin'—he's all the time talkin' about it. He knows wonderful places for walrus, sir, where they almost cover the small rock islands, they is so many. An' he knows where the bear country is, too, sir. He told me once how they had to hang things up on a string so they dangled in the wind an' made a noise in order to keep the bears from prowlin' aroun' their camps. An' more than the huntin', sir, he do want to show you how big them islands is."

By nightfall, Wetalltok's home at Charlton was no more. His wife and three children, his two partners, their wives and seven children and twenty dogs, kayaks, sledges, tents, and hunting gear were aboard the *Laddie*. Their impedimenta topped the *Laddie's* deck load, which was already rail high, while among the boxes and bales in the choking hold, Wetalltok and his tribe made their temporary home. The dogs, chained in the dories which swung from the davits over the rails, whined and yelped and chorused to the skies.

At nightfall, the fifth day of sailing northward, we sighted the southern outliers of Wetalltok's islands—little "humpbacks" of jet with rings of surf around them. On long lazy swells the *Laddie* rolled, aimlessly, with sails aflap. The night stole in. We peered through the gloom. All we could see was white rings of surf embracing the black shadows that were islands. As it was too dark to put out to sea again we crept into a six-fathom sounding and paid out fifty fathoms of chain in the lee of the nearest shore. Though the sky, when all but the watch turned in to sleep, was cloudless and crystalled with stars, by midnight, the wind piped wild and quick through the rigging. Clouds scudded swiftly through the sky. The *Laddie's* stern tailed off, not a biscuit's throw from shore. The dogs, drenched by the seas, howled and whined, the big round eyes of the women and children peered anxiously at us from the hold, while with lanterns we hovered around the anchor chains speculating on how long they would hold.

Daylight showed us an island, a lump of rock not much larger than the ship itself, all agleam from the spume that drove over it. Nowhere was there a landing. The rack and retching of the chains as they sawed through the steel eyes of the *Laddie's* nose, the slosh of the seas that combed us, and the boom of the island's shore was the dirge fifteen hours long before Bill bawled out, "The glass is climbin', sir." As suddenly as it had come, the gale died down.

Northwestward, blue wisps of loom that seemed to float on the sea were our first glimpse of Wetalltok's islands. We rounded, a few hours on, what proved to be the southeastern extremity of the island group. From a narrow winding

gutway we came out upon a narrow sound, landless on its northern rim. The black forbidding shell of the outer crest gave way to cliffs, ribboned by the yellow-gray and terra cotta Nastapoka rocks. The lowlands were carpets of tawn and russet moss. Wetalltok and his throng had eyes for nothing but the game—schools of white whales looping through the seas; flock upon flock of eiders winging off before us; and geese skimming the profiles of slopes and hills, or regiments of them high in the air.

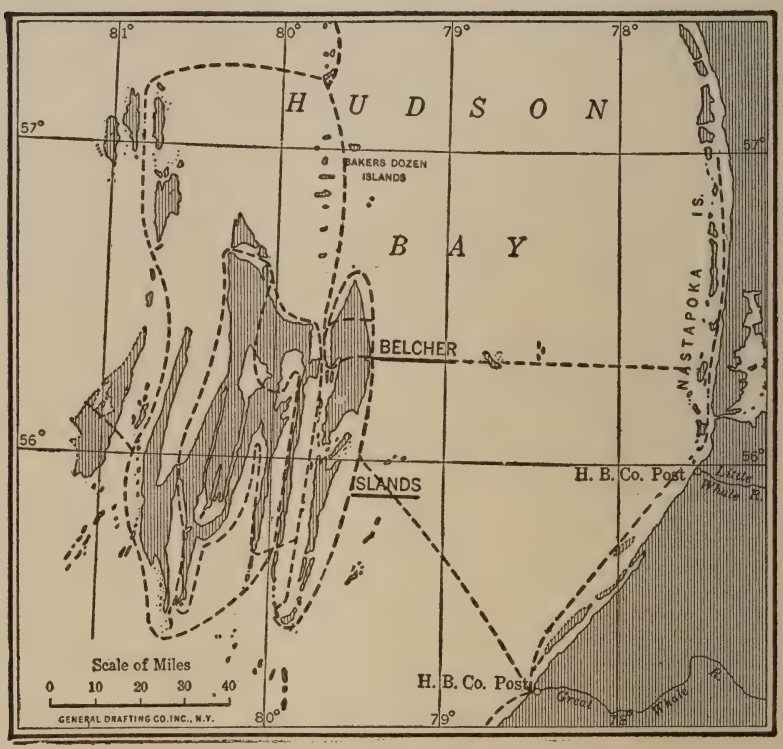
We found a site for a camp at the head of a snug horseshoe harbour. A noisy stream of fresh water ran into it; the head of it was a beach of sand; fine landing for kayaks and canoes. The ground around was for the most part smooth moss sward.

We hardly had anchor down when Wetalltok from the crow's-nest called out, "Innuet!" and pointed toward the sound. An Eskimo in a kayak came paddling toward us. Within hailing distance he halted. Wetalltok called out in Eskimo, then rapidly he paddled in. Open-mouthed, he clambered up over the rail. Speechless, he stood on deck, staring and smiling by turns. We had to suspend operations whilst Wetalltok and his throng, crowding around him, plied him with such a rapid-fire of questions that the big mug of tea we had given him grew cold in his hands.

By a map he showed us where the main camps of the islands lay. With him as pilot, Wetalltok, and two of his crew, I put off in the launch. Darkness had come before we chugged into the gloom of a harbour some twenty miles away where on a cobbled shore stood six tents of Eskimos. The launch swept in, its rattle reëchoing among the hills. Ex-

cited packs of dogs stood howling to the skies; from the tents not a soul came forth until Wetalltok called: "Innuet," "Chimo," and an old man haltingly came toward us.

Wetalltok explained to him who and what we were and in a little time a group of natives was gathered around us shak-



MAP OF THE BELCHER ISLANDS

Showing Mr. Flaherty's routes about the islands. The Belcher Islands lie in the southern part of Hudson Bay, just north of James Bay.

ing hands and exclaiming their surprise. From hiding places amongst the rocks the women and children too came down to greet us. Over old times and friends Wetalltok and the Eskimos chattered the whole night through. We struck

off at daylight for the ship with all the Eskimos the launch would hold. Clad in bearskin, dogskin, and eider feathers,

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MAP OF HUDSON BAY

Showing, in the oval, the large land masses that apparently were intended to represent the Belcher Islands. Later the Belchers were shown on even the best maps in dotted outline as tiny groups of islands. It was not until Mr. Flaherty rediscovered them that they were shown in their proper position and proportions.

they were as primitive looking a lot as I have ever seen. Said Salty Bill, regarding their wide-eyed and gaping masks

as we swung in alongside: "Well, sir, some queer fish comes in with the tide."

Within a week, kayaks catamaraned, the rifle-cracking launch and dories had ferried the *Laddie's* cargo to shore to where streams of old men, women, and children carried it to the building huts, speculating the while as to what each box and bale and bundle contained. For hours at a time they watched the crew build the kablunak's big igloo. Prizes to them were waste bits of board and bent nails.

Until the sea ice formed there was a succession of bleak, melancholy days with gales of driving sleet and rain. We were taken up with work around the base getting our gear and equipment in shape, making sledges and bartering for dogs for the winter sledging. We made inland journeys over the island upon which we lived, and cruises along its coast-line, in the hope of locating sufficient driftwood for our winter's fuel. We had counted on getting driftwood but nowhere could we find a supply to serve two huts the winter through, so on the last open water of the year, we took the *Laddie* across to the Great Whale Coast on the mainland and returned with wood, laden to the rails. Of coal, we had some four tons, all that was obtainable at Moose Factory, and this, with the *Laddie's* cargo, I hoped would be enough.

With each new face that came drifting in, Wetalltok and I pored over maps and listened to what he had to say about the islands, and about his own hunting grounds in particular. By the number of sleeps it took to travel, we could approximate the distance to the point whence he had come. The magnitude of the country grew with each new tale.

With pieces of iron ore, Wetalltok explained to the

Eskimos that it was these rocks we came to seek. He told them how the white man "boils" these rocks and fashions the wonderful knives and guns and spear-heads which they hold so dear. He told them how they could tell if the blue rocks were iron ore by scratching them with flint, for the scratches made red streaks like blood. Several among them knew, they thought, where were the sevick (iron) rocks and promised to bring in pieces when they came again, which would be over the sea ice in winter.

II

DECEMBER came in with calm, clear, frosty skies, raked at night by glorious auroras and lighted by day with floods of sunshine. The tiniest lakes were soon closed with emerald seals, then the larger in quick succession. The white rims of the harbour crept farther and farther out from shore, and along the sweeping arc of the sound itself a jagged ice edge sparkled in the sun. Within two weeks the *Laddie* had ceased swinging from her chains and the seal of winter was everywhere.

When Christmas came we kept open house for Wetalltok and his throng and all the islanders who were camped near by. Salty Bill improvised a tree. Spruce boughs, which he had brought up from Moose for the purpose of making spruce beer, he lashed to a pole. The candles were foot-long miners' dips, and the decorations were brightly labelled fruit cans from the cook's scrap pile. The presents were black plug tobacco and matches for the men and needles and combs and trade candy for the women and their flocks. While Bill acted Santa Claus, Wetalltok's gramophone belched forth its rasping sounds. The lilt of "Tipperary" and of Harry Lauder's songs was contagious, but the "Preacher and the Bear," with its monologue and the realistic growling from a supposed bear, was a knock-out.

"Nanook! Nanook!" (the bear! the bear!) they ex-

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ROBERT J. FLAHERTY, F.R.G.S.

TOOKTOO
(The Deer)
Chief of Sikoslingmuit Eskimos
Southern Baffin Land

claimed, rocking with laughter, but the kiddies, half frightened, clung to their mothers and rolled their almond eyes.

When the ceremonies around the tree were over, Bill herded the teddy-bear youngsters around the stove and popped corn, the most surprising thing by way of food they had ever seen. "Cakeot nucky" (the gun food) they called it, as enraptured, they watched the kernels popping in the air.

We had, however, to bring to an end the celebrations within the overcrowded house, for our nostrils could not become attuned to the seal odour of their society. We wound up the day by playing at nothing less than a game of baseball on the harbour ice. It was coated with just enough snow to make good ground. The *Laddie's* starboard side we used as a back-stop. The bleachers were the *Laddie's* deck, bulwarks, and rigging. If, what with our cumbersome fur costumes, the game lacked speed, it did not lack interest for the gallery—old men, women, young and old, and squalling youngsters—especially if one of their kind was fortunate enough to hit the ball, for, as they saw it, the pitcher's rôle was to hit the batter! Only darkness stopped us.

It was the second of January before the first sledges of Eskimos came in from out of the mysterious west; strangers, they proved to be, who had not heard of our advent on the islands. When we had pulled their dogs and ours from a big rolling ball of fight, Wetalltok led them indoors, ensconced them on the floor, and thrust sea biscuits and big mugs of scalding tea into their ready hands. It was a long time before we could question them, so lost were they in wonder of the kablunak's igloo, but finally we did extract the informa-

tion we had long been waiting for, that everywhere to westward the sea ice was fit for travel.

At noon with a thirteen-dog team, Wetalltok, two of the crew, and I, struck out for the west. The visitors with their dogs and sleds accompanied us to a point less than a sleep away where was, they thought, an outcrop of sevick rocks, enough to load the kablunak's ship many, many times. They knew that it must be a sevick rock, for like the flesh it showed red when they scratched it.

Winter bared its teeth as we filed over the ice. Wind swooped down in gales; it scoured the fields and hills and sent clouds of snow smoke whirling through the air. Within the day we reached the point where the sevick lay. And sevick it proved to be—not only in loose pieces wherever were wind-swept patches of bare ground, but in a vein, from twenty-five to thirty feet wide, running north and south along the coast. Though the coast was veiled in drift, and the vein outcropped intermittently, we traced it southward for thirty miles, so vividly did the big red band of it stand out through the black and white desolation. I was to find out before the year was through that it was the richest and largest occurrence to be found on all the islands.

There was no end to the gales and drifting snow. We continued northwestward over lakes and ponds and difficult boulder-stream ground into the interior. En route, we hit the ice of the northern half of Wetalltok's great lake, which he had told me was so large that from the south end looking north there was no land, just water, like the sea. But as we travelled to its head we could see nothing, for the drift was blinding.

A half sleep from Wetalltok's lake we struck the sea. Drift again filled the air. The dogs wailed now and then; some of them vomited from the cold. Suddenly they gave tongue. Before I knew what had happened, Wetalltok was at their head, rifle-cracking his long lash. Beyond him, crouching over his snowblind, arms folded on knees and harpoon in lap, sat an Eskimo. Through a breathing hole no larger than the butt end of his harpoon he was watching for seal to rise. Since dawn, Wetalltok said, he had been waiting there. As quietly as may be we détoured and in a moment the drift had swallowed him.

By nightfall we picked up the orange square of an igloo's lighted window. It was the igloo of one Rainbow. Not a seal had he killed for eight days, said he. All that he had to live on was sea pigeons, from an open tidal pool near by. Just before we arrived he had killed one—the first in two days—and his wife, who was plucking it, held it up for me to see. Though they knew that I had little or nothing in the way of food to give away, their own troubles were forgotten in the concern for the visitor who had come among them. While Rainbow helped Wetalltok with the dogs out-of-doors, the good wife hustled here and there putting to rights her igloo's disarray. She sent her daughters scurrying out-of-doors for a pail of clean tea-water snow, while she unrolled my sleeping bag, pulled off my kooletah, and laid it over her feebly burning lamp so that it would be warm by morning. Nor did she allow her children, while we ate our beans and bacon, to hover around, for fear it would prove embarrassing. When they saw me crawl in to sleep, they spoke in whispers. I dozed off to the hiss of driving snow and the

low sounds of their speculations as to when the seals would come.

I told Rainbow, as we made ready to leave, to come into the base when I got back, and I would try to be hospitable and kind, and, "Yes," added Wetalltok, "be sure you keep one eye open for the sevick rocks as you come." Rainbow said he would—that is, if he ever killed another seal; and there was a chorus of laughter.

For hours two sundogs, slashed by rainbows which rose straight up from the sea, flanked the sun. The snow smoke was like lace drawn by some giant hand over the black knobs of hills and the folds and wrinkles of the satin plains. But the glory of the day was short. By three o'clock the sun was smothered by the snow. When I mentioned igloo, Wetalltok said, "Ouki," and pointed with his whip stock to a snow slope far ahead. As my eyes followed his direction, I saw, nested together like so many hives, a village of snow houses.

In the first igloo into which I crawled was the wreck of an old man; his kindly face, seamed and weather-scarred, had two shining dots for eyes. "There is no more hunting for me," he lamented, and pointed to his legs which were bent and twisted by some disease. His daughter, no more than a girl, followed us in. Abashed by our gaze she furiously shook the snow powder from her furs. "She does the hunting for this old man," Wetalltok explained. "Every day with the old man of the igloo adjoining she goes on the ice after seals. Every night for ten days she says they have been coming home with sledges empty—they have not even seal oil for their lamps. A salmon, now and then, which the

old women catch in the ponds near by, is all the food they have." But they all forgot their troubles in their delight at seeing us. Wetalltok and they, with one of my flickering candles and the kablunak's good tea twice boiled between them, yarned half the night through.

For two days we crawled over the mouths of deep bays and in-draughts of the island's south coast. Valueless days for reconnaissance, however, for impenetrable drift still drove through the air.

The glimpse of showers of sparks which a chimney vomited to the gale told us that at last we were home. In a moment more I was standing before the crackling stove, rubbing cheeks, ears, and nose, which felt as if they were made of parchment and burning warm.

Until midnight, to the tune of the drift lashing the cabin walls and the wailing of the wind among the eaves, we talked. "'Tis the land of the gales, sir," said Salty Bill. "In the last nine days you has been gone but one day come clear. In the cracker last night, rifle shots woke me. 'Twas the big provision tent strippin' to pieces. An' these winds makes it hard for the huskies, sir. Every time there is a knockin' on the door I knows that one of them is on the other side an' with 'kopunga' (hungry), on his lips. They says there is no seals, save out in the rough ice, an' they're not venturin' there now for fear of bein' swept to sea. 'Tis the rare salmon or two what pulls them through, sir, an' what little grub I has been givin' 'em.

"But we've got to close down on dolin' out more grub, for 'tis meltin' away. I have to ration Wetalltok's family in the hut now, for the huskies has been hangin' around an'

of course, sir, husky fashion, they just had to share with them until themselves went hungry."

Wetalltok looked worried when he came in the next morning. He gave me to understand that he was not going to keep on living off my dwindling supply of food, but was going to take his family and go afield with the others. When I told him that he couldn't be spared, he begged for one of the teams and rations for ten days. He left the following morning, saying he was not coming back without seal.

III

THE gales and cold kept on; the last of the big military tents housing our food and gear was stripped into ribbons. One black night we were awakened by the pandemonium of fighting dogs. Tookalook's old master dog was chewing at a big sealed tin of bully beef, tearing it open, strips of tin jammed between his bleeding fangs. Old boots, whips, or harness, and even a pup (Tookalook lost three in as many days) were delicacies for them these times.

On the twelfth day was ended the biggest drifter of the year. The cabin was snowed up to the roof—the dogs scampered over it. Wetalltok's hut was completely buried; a shaft straight down through the snow marked its entrance. The forlorn *Laddie* was drifted bulwarks high.

"We may get good weather now," was old Tookalook's observation as he scanned the brick-red sunset and pointed to the stars outcropping above it in the steely sky. "Wetalltok, I think, will now get his chance for seals." Bill and I were long since busy with supper-making when old Tookalook popped his head in through the door and asked me for my "big eye" (telescope), saying that Wetalltok's wife from the lookout hill saw the black specks of a team coming in toward us. Tookalook wondered if by some rare fortune it could be Wetalltok.

It was not long before the din of knocking brought us out-of-doors to where on the lookout every man, woman, and

child stood watching intently the slowly moving black forms of an approaching team. Wetalltok it was, they thought, but as to whether he was coming loaded or empty, they could not yet tell. The gloom thickened and the sledge crawled like a snail. I went indoors for a moment for the ship's big glass, when suddenly the wild exclamation "Netsuk!" resounded through the air.

"Wetalltok it is, sir," said Bill, "an' what's more he's bringin' home the seals."

"How many?" I asked as Wetalltok waded through the crowd toward us.

"Timietow," said he, holding up ten fingers.

The babel of some forty dogs shattered the peace and quiet of the first calm night in many days. Around Wetalltok, his young son, and Tookalook, the dogs, just out of reach of Wetalltok's cracking whip, circled belly-down, like the wolves they were. Their eyes, reflecting the lantern light, shone like bolts of fire. Their muzzles were white with froth of hunger. Constantly, Wetalltok kept cracking his whip around their circle, a dread lash with which he could split an ear or cut clear through their tough hides. But one or another would attempt a desperate sally for the seal meat which old Tookalook was portioning. They were too intent to fight save when some poor devil was caught by Wetalltok's lash. The pain of it would send him bounding straight in the air, or maddened beyond all control he would bury his fangs in the unfortunate nearest him. When Bill and I turned toward camp the dogs were sleeping and Wetalltok and his tribe had crawled into the feast of the warmth-giving seal for which they had waited so long.

GOOSE HUNTING

There were no hungry hordes of hangers-on about the hut from this time on, for everywhere, Wetalltok said, the big ice had been broken by the gale, and seal meat was in plenty in the encampments of the islanders.

By the middle of March the days grew long and warm. Cottony clouds sailed through a sky resplendently blue. There were glorious days of sledging. We made in one day distances that had required three.

Toward the end of May, Wetalltok and I, storm-bound on a rocky point some thirty miles from camp, were awakened one wild night by the boom and grind and milling of the big ice tumbling before a southeast gale. When daylight came the threads of the outer coast were broken by gigantic rafts of ice. Beyond them stood smoking sea. There had been sleet and snow and rain for two days past, and the snow-covered ice that lay between us and the camp was like a sponge charged with water. Here and there were pools so deep that the dogs swam, the sledge floated, and we, following after, waded through depths above the knee. By dark, camp was reached. We soaked in its good red heat.

For a fortnight Bill had been over-hauling the little *Nastapoka*—the self-same craft, the reader will remember, with which I made the first attempt to reach Wetalltok's islands. Upon her I depended for the summer cruises around the island and for the last trip down the bay toward the railway frontier. For the *Laddie*, since only Bill remained of her crew (the others had been sent across to the mainland), had been abandoned. In fact, her bulwarks, yards, masts, and arms had been broken up two months before to supply the deficiency in our fuel.

June came in with days long and gloriously warm. House-flies buzzed over the sunlit panes of our windows. Bumble-bees hovered among the mosses. Young would-be hunters with miniature bows and arrows stalked for yellowlegs, and aimed mockingly at the flocks of geese that came sailing overhead. Wetalltok, old Tookalook, and their families squatted by their kayak frames, put on fresh sealskin covers, while Bill worked upon the *Nastapoka*, which stood by.

Hunting-gear and summer clothes had long since been made. The *Nastapoka* stood ready to slide into the sea. On the memorable seventeenth of June we were awakened by a strangely familiar sound. It was the wash of surf.

IV

"TIS a wind-ridden land, sir, and no mistake," said Salty, as we crawled into our diminutive cabin for an hour's sleep. The *Nastapoka* rolled and heaved at the end of her chains. For three days the drive of sleet and rain resounded like blasts of sand on our cabin roof and walls. The only breaks in its monotony were wild squalls, strong enough, though we rode under bare poles, to heel us over.

"Yes, sir," said Bill, continuing, "now I minds how we looked forward to the breaking up, and how when it came our uncivil times would be over, sir. But here we are, sir, ten days from camp and the log on the lean side of fifty miles." After a rumble of oaths that would have made a bloody pirate feel at home, Bill dozed off to sleep.

We bowled out the next morning, and over big wallops of seas, sailing close-hauled along the main south coast into the west. We crossed the mouths of bays and in-draughts so deep that their inland shores were thin lines, gray-blue. As in winter, we only bee-lined from point to point as the weather willed, cruising, however, strips of coast which the sledge trip had not touched.

At the last north camp of islanders, first among the swarms of kayakers who scooted out to where we were slipping anchor in the harbour was old Mukpollo, his Billiken mask smiling welcome. "Walrus there are," said he, after

we had "chimoed," shaken hands, and given him some black plug tobacco for a pipe that, upside down, poked out from his lips. "My own eyes have seen them," said he, "a whole island of them. And my!"—as his eyes swept the *Nastapoka's* decks—"but you have the fine omiak for getting them."

But "How far is it?" was our first question.

"Oh, not far," said he, and he pointed northeastward over open sea. His idea of "not far," it turned out, was a long day's kayaking; but the picture he painted, as only an Eskimo can where game is involved, decided us. Mukpollo came aboard at dawn—every man of the encampment clamoured to come, too—and with his kayak slung up on deck we sailed away.

At sundown we picked up the half-round rock of a small island which the log said stood forty miles at sea. A rookery it proved to be, as we crawled close in; over it like pin-points in the sky, as black and thick as flies, swarms of sea pigeons rose in panic. We were looking for a landing amongst the windings of its cobbled shores when suddenly we sagged in the trough of a big ground swell; the *Nastapoka* struck, and the sea that followed swung us in upon a nest of reefs. Bill jumped into the surf with a line around his middle, and half swam, half tumbled to land. Scrambling up to a huge boulder he wrapped around the line. But in less time than it takes to tell, the *Nastapoka*, her bottom broken, was sloshing full, and everything that was floatable rose out of the hatchways and drifted in to shore.

Gloomily enough we surveyed the hulk—which, half submerged, rocked to and fro in the lazy ground swell—and the wreckage that we had laid out before us on the rocks;

blankets outspread to dry, a side of bacon, sugar now turning to syrup, and a dripping bag of tea. We made a roaring driftwood fire and while we stood around it waiting for the steaming clothes we wore to dry, we munched sodden sea biscuit and gulped scalding tea and discussed pro and con just what was best to do.

Our only means of transport, I pointed out, were the kayak and our canoe. "And yes," said Bill, "some sixty miles of sea to use them in." But Mukpollo said there were four small islands, albeit they were surf-bound, strung along the way to the nearest point of the main coast. He mapped them in the sand, and then, leading up to the island's crest, pointed to the gray dot of the first of them which appeared to be about fifteen miles away.

"Well, sir," said Bill, turning from one of the gloomy surveys of the *Nastapoka's* corpse swinging among the rocks, "if I could find me a decent size o' driftwood, sir, I wants one try at salvagin' before we leaves." And though he led a hope forlorn I gave in.

He and Mukpollo came back within an hour carrying on their shoulders a log of driftwood that for these latitudes was surprisingly large. "'Tis a lucky find, sir," said Bill as he threw it down. "There's ne'er one more like it on the island," and I caught a gleam of hope in his eye. He unfolded his plan. "The log is what we calls the Spanish winch, sir," said he, "and when I makes it we'll have the *Nastapoka*, if the weather holds, up on dry land."

"But look here, Bill," said I, "there are holes in the *Nastapoka* that you or I could crawl in."

"I minds that, sir, but with canvas patches we'll tar them

and patch her over, and I think, sir, they'll see us to the camp."

Willingly enough we started in. Bill first ran a line from the *Nastapoka* in two hundred feet on shore to a narrow crack in a ledge of rock. In the crack he inserted the flukes of two anchors. In the round of the anchor flukes he shoved the driftwood log which, after infinite pains, Mukpollo and he with hunting knives had made fairly smooth. Around the log he took two turns of the line which led to the *Nastapoka's* nose, and with chains we took half turns in the ends of the winching log and, inserting stakes, began winding.

Hour after hour the winding kept on, to the tune of Bill's creaking Spanish winch, the slosh of surf flowing in and out the *Nastapoka's* wounds, and Bill's "She comes, me byes, she comes." There were aching backs and blistered hands for every foot we gained. On the morning of the third day Bill pointed to lowering clouds banked out in the west. "If there is a cracker in them," said he, "there'll be nothing left us but the *Nastapoka's* bones." But the "cracker" kept away, and inch by inch the *Nastapoka* came. By nightfall she was safe.

Bill's plan, however, of patching her temporarily with tarred canvas was not so successful. In one place her planking for four feet in length and one and a half feet in width, and the ribs that supported them, were gone. So three of us, at dawn of the first calm day, struck out in the canoe for camp, a hop-skip-and-jump, as it were, between the surf-bound islands that intervened. Within seven days we were back again with extra oakum, tar, and tools, and six lengths of precious board, which, since every scrap of wood

about the camp had long ago been used up for fuel, we had to rip from the walls themselves. In three weeks the *Nastapoka* again was launched, but a more patched and bandaged craft never rode the seas. With relays of the crew bailing the while, Bill finally shoved her battered nose into the mill pond of camp harbour.

By the first of August our iron ore expeditions were, as far as circumstances would permit, complete. We had found, all told, five ranges lying east and west from one another, an average of six miles apart, and extending north and south a distance of thirty miles. The extent of iron-ore-bearing rocks actually outcropping was more than one hundred square miles.

Two of my crew had left by sledge in early January for the mainland, to proceed thence southward along the coast and overland to the line, taking with them plans of deposits, and, for analysis, samples of the ore. They were to return with a party of Sir William's engineers who were to report upon the commerciability of what we had found.

After weeks of waiting, shouts of "Omiak! Omiak!" rang through the air, and a York boat wing-and-wing came bowling up the Sound. The engineers en route since the first of June were my own father, who, wearing a two-months-old-growth of beard, I hardly recognized; Doctor Moore, geologist, and W. H. Howard, surveyor, who besides claim-surveying was to make astronomical observations for the still skeptical government at Ottawa. I shall never forget my difficulties that memorable day trying to play host and read the while the long year's mail.

Within a fortnight the ore examinations were complete,

and the visitors sailed out for Great Whale River on the mainland, at which point they were to reach the fur ship when it called in southward bound. At Moose Factory, they were to await the coming of Bill and myself on the *Nastapoka*, then by canoe we would all journey together up river to the rail frontier.

Since the *Nastapoka* could carry only our food, instruments, and personal gear, I divided the hut and its furnishings among Wetalltok, Tookalook, Mukpollo, and their families. There was everything—dishes, an old mirror, old magazines, powder, caps, and cartridges, knives, axes, old clothing, cloth, and old shoes. As a special payment the gramophone and records went to Calla, our cook; a rifle to Mukpollo; the canoe to Tookalook, and to Wetalltok our poor old pianola, much scarred and stained and out of tune from rough transport and misuse. But to Wetalltok it was the most wonderful thing in all the world—"big box with the many insides!"

On the thirteenth of September, with the *Nastapoka* deep laden with our personal gear, films, instruments, and food —Bill and I said our last good-byes . . . regretfully enough pulled up anchor, the crowd on shore gloomily watching us, and sailed out through the harbour past the old *Laddie's* stranded hulk, and on into the Sound. Wetalltok, old Tookalook, and Mukpollo followed us for a while, waving as they ran along the shore.

I received some letters a year later from Great Whale River, dated three months before, and in them was news of Wetalltok's islands. Rainbow had gone mad, the result of

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ALLEGOO
(Shining Water)
Sikoslingmuit Eskimo Woman
Southern Baffin Land

starvation. For many days he had been at large with the Winchester and cartridges that I had given him, spreading terror among the islanders. To save themselves they had had to kill him.

Poor old Tookalook, in less than a month of my departure had dared the crossing to the Great Whale Coast in the canoe I had given him, and his kayak, catamaraned. Big winds had caught him. The canoe had been found, bottom up, on the mainland shore.

A letter from good old Mavor, the factor at Great Whale, read:

Perhaps you will remember having given your pianola to Wetalltok just before you left the Belcher Islands last fall. Well, Wetalltok was stuck with that pianola on his hands; he couldn't take it into his igloo, and he couldn't live in your cabin for he had, of course, no fuel. So he conceived the idea of sledging that pianola over to me—it seemed that you told him I would be keen to buy it—but how he could transport a full-size pianola over eighty-five miles of sea ice, and some of it rafted mighty high at that, was more than I could see, but he did it—brought it right into Great Whale Post, only to find that I wasn't there, for I had been transferred in the fall, south to Fort George (186 miles away). So he kept on down the coast having obtained supplies from the factor on the strength of the sale of the pianola to me, and after the Lord knows how many days, he came sledging in one day at nightfall, right into my post yard, with a "Chimo" and a "Here, Angarooka, is the box with the many insides." The thing worked, you'll be surprised to hear, though some of its notes were what Wetalltok called "sick sounds"!

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PART III

EXPLORATION OF NORTHERN UNGAVA

EXPLORATION OF NORTHERN UNGAVA

I

THIS narrative begins at Great Whale River on that memorable night in March, 1912, when, as the reader may remember, one Pitchalock came to old Harold's hut with the news that the icefields over which for months I had been planning to cross to Wetalltok's islands had been broken by the gales. The failure to get to Wetalltok's islands in the diminutive *Nastapoka*, the five months' long wait for the sea ice to form, and then this freak break-up of the ice, knocked all my plans to pieces. There was left me out of the wreckage, however, one plan that I had long hoped to carry through. This was an exploration of the interior of northern Ungava.[1]

This interior was the largest unexplored area remaining on the mainland of northern Canada. The map of it was a blank. Low speaks of it as follows:

> There still remains about 120,000 square miles of the northern portion of the peninsula between Hudson and Ungava bays, totally unknown to any one except the wandering bands of Eskimos who occasionally penetrate inland from the coast.[2]

[1]Robert J. Flaherty: "Two Traverses Across Ungava Peninsula, Labrador," *Geographical Review*, vol. VI, no. 2, August, 1918 (American Geographical Society, New York).

[2]Previous explorations of the Labrador Peninsula lay to southward through the Indian country. The northernmost started from Richmond Gulf, and following the Clearwater, the Larch and the Koksoak Rivers, was first taken by Doctor Mendry in 1824 for the Hudson's Bay Company. Doctor Mendry's expedition is the basis for Ballantyne's famous boys' story, "Ungava." Low made the same crossing in 1896 and mapped and geologically explored the country.

At only one point had the interior been penetrated. This was when Low himself, sledging in some forty-five miles from the coast of Hudson Bay, discovered and explored the course of Kasiagaluk, the Great Seal Lake of the Eskimos, until the starving condition of his dogs forced him to retreat. Of Kasiagaluk, which he called Lake Minto, Low speaks as follows:

> Kasiagaluk or Lake Minto is one of the largest lakes of the Labrador Peninsula, being according to the Eskimos, upwards of one hundred miles long.[1]

With the exception of Low's fragmentary map of Kasiagaluk and his route thither, all other details of lakes and streams, as shown on all the maps, were merely copies of maps made by the Eskimos. What Low had seen was merely the beginning. How big was Kasiagaluk—how big its discharge, the mysterious river which wound down the peninsula's far slope to Ungava Bay? And all this was but one thread of a maze of waterways hidden in the silences of what seemed to me then illimitable barrens of the great peninsula!

Besides, there was the west coast of Ungava Bay to explore for iron ore. Along this coast, much of it shown on the maps as nothing but a dotted line, I might intersect an extension of the inaccessible iron ore series long since known to exist along the lower reaches of the Koksoak, some two hundred miles southward. Indeed, to find an iron ore series similar to those on the Nastapokas and such as I hoped to find on the Belcher Islands, was the object of the undertaking.

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[1]See A. P. Low: "Report on Explorations in the Labrador Peninsula along the East Main, Koksoak, Hamilton, Manicuagan and Portions of Other Rivers in 1892–93–94–95," Report L of *Annual Rept. Geol. Survey of Canada*, vol. VIII for 1895, Ottawa, 1896.

With old Harold and Nero I discussed ways and means. The distance from Great Whale north a hundred and fifty miles to White Whale Point, thence inland across the great interior to what Nero called the eastern sea (Ungava Bay) was roughly, as we should wind, seven hundred miles—not a great distance, as Nero pointed out, for sea coast travel; but inland where "him, no seal, no tooktoo, no nothing," a more difficult matter. "Since I am small boy," Nero went on, "deer, him all same gone." Meaning that the vast herds of countless thousands that once wandered through the illimitable barrens were now no more. "Dogs, him starve," said Nero, referring to his journey with Low, inland to the great lake, Kasegaleek, and eastward along its coast, until the starving condition of the dogs forced them to retreat to the sea.

For food we must depend entirely upon the supply we could carry on our sledges. Nero would be unable to go with me all the way. His wife refused, in the face of the utmost of the fur trade blandishment and all that I could offer, to let him be gone on so long a journey. We did, however, arrange that he should accompany us as far inland as he had travelled. This point, the one he had made with Low, we estimated to be one fourth of the total journey from sea to sea. When we reached this point I would cull the best dogs from both teams, and take on the additional supplies from Nero's sledge, leaving enough to see Nero back to the coast.

Harold's negotiations for two men were protracted. One, Omarolluk, who, though a newcomer at Great Whale, had already won for himself a reputation as a hunter and a

sledging man, was, Harold considered, the man most desirable for the trip. His wife, too, kept him for several days in a state of indecision. Harold finally won her over by assuring her that she and hers would live on rations at the post during Omarolluk's absence, and to clinch the bargain gave her a silk bandanna, some beads, and sweeties for her youngsters. To Omarolluk, however, the angarooka's food and the princely wage, eighty-five beavers a month (almost three times the post wage)—inducements such as I should have relied upon—were of small moment. But Harold's picture of the big deer-killing in spring where the great deer migrations ford the Koksoak River inland from Ungava Bay, which he, Omarolluk, would take part in, provided that we accomplished the journey, proved to be the winning card.

Omarolluk secured, Harold swung into line for him a sledging partner, Wetunik by name, whose principal stock in trade I later found was his smiling disposition and his penchant for the angarooka's good nucky.

Finally our food supply was checked and overhauled. This was done on the trade-shop floor for the benefit of Omarolluk and Wetunik, who by dint of hefting—weights and measures being of course unknown to them—were finally made satisfied, jubilant in fact, over what they felt sure was a good and sufficient outfit.

At break of day we started. Harold ran up the flag. Omarolluk's long whip cracked through the air. The howling din of the dogs stopped suddenly. They lunged ahead. The sledges rocked like ships at sea behind the multitude of their galloping heels. The waving throngs, the drift-swept

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NASCAUPIE INDIAN CHIEF

Northern Labrador

cabins, the flag, ironed out against the stark steel sky, soon dropped behind the shoulder of an intervening hill.

Our journey along the coast was familiar ground. Here and there we encamped with old friends, deeply interested, all of them, in the prospects of our long journey. The kindly souls gave us their best advice of the country inland as far as they in the old deer-hunting days had wandered. All was easy travelling until we came to the rough ice off Gulf Hazard. Here Nero's sledge from a pressure ridge some twenty feet high pitched over a sheer wall of ice. One of its two-inch plank runners was broken clean across the grain. We retreated a dozen miles to the encampment of one Jim Crow. With him we bartered for a new sledge. Much scurrying on the part of Nero from the sledge owner's camp to mine and back again, more times than I have the patience to tell. "Jim Crow, him say yes, all right, your paper [order] to Koksoak angarooka. Tobaccomik, sweetieloo, him plenty; only now him want matches and maybe bead his baby." And so it went on, until finally Nero's blandly smiling mask, poking itself through my camp door, announced that "Jim Crow, him full." The order that my numb fingers made out on Great Whale Post resembled somewhat the inventory of a Woolworth store.

Nero was made much of by his admiring fellows, not only as my *valet de chambre* (God save the mark!) but did he not know all the intricacies of the white man's tongue so that he could satisfy them upon all the points upon which they were curious—my safety razor, my gun, my kit of medicines which Nero warned them were not meant for food, and the thermometer? I kept night and morning records. As I

crawled out at nightfall and hung the thermometer upon the point of a harpoon sticking in the snow, a throng gathered around me. Nero was called upon to explain. When he had concluded he translated for my benefit. "I tell 'em," said he, "when white string [the mercury] go up over hole [zero on the scale] everything all same water, but him go down under hole, she's all ice." Omarolluk, however, looked doubtful. He kept looking at the tiny thermometer swaying in the wind, and then out upon the miles of frozen sea. For the life of me I could not understand why he was so puzzled. Said Nero by way of explanation: "Omarolluk say, your little thing can't do, only cold make all that ice."

We were not long out from Jim Crow's camp when we again entered rough ice at Gulf Hazard. On all the thousand miles of coast of Hudson Bay there is no ice so dangerous, for here, through a mere slot through huge lumps of hills, discharge the waters of Richmond Gulf, in a long, writhing tongue that cleaves its way over two miles straight out to sea. We were forced to détour eight miles from land, and even here Nero, testing the ice with his harpoon, drove it through. "Him Adelite [Indian] name, 'qua qua chickawan,'" said Nero. "She mean," he explained, "'him swallow quick.'"

The next day, though it was distant thirty miles, we picked up the smoke of Nastapoka Falls twisting in the sky—the landmark we had long been looking for. From it we were to strike inland across the big interior. In the seven days we had been journeying along the coast, not a seal had been killed. All we had in the way of fresh meat was some fifty pounds of blubber for the dogs' diet of corn-

meal. And now, Nero reminded us, we were leaving the sea and the life-sustaining seal it held. He wondered if it were not better to camp until a seal kill had been made and feed up our not over-thriving dogs for the big trip ahead; but this might mean several days' delay. Anyway, concluded Nero, if the dogs did not pick up we might camp on one of the lakes of the interior and cut down through the ice on a chance for fish. Marked by a monument of cobblestones, we left a cache of rations sufficient to help Nero on his return, and ourselves as well, if by any chance we had to retreat.

With Nero's team in the lead, we swung up the long steep slopes of the coastal range, whose seared and wrinkled crest loomed above us in the eastern sky. We climbed into stiff winds as that memorable day wore on. Whirlpools and eddies of snow came racing around and through us as they birled toward the big wide void of sea. The western sky was red before we reached a respite from the climb, a plateau that led us over a miniature cobbled plain to a deep gulf among the hills. With a last long look over the sea below, and with a "Good-bye seals!" from Nero, we were soon buried in the ranges.

During the next four days we covered less than thirty miles, for we were lost most of the time, so confusing were the slots and grooves of valleys through which we travelled. Nero would have to climb to lookouts and signal to us, the handful of dots strung out in some pocket far below him, the course to follow. We often toiled only to find our valley a blind, at its end a sheer wall facing us. And then to work out of it meant both teams and ourselves harnessed to a single sledge.

Along the coast driftwood had been our fuel. Now all we could depend upon was an occasional stunted tree that grew in some deeper wind-sheltered pocket of the hills. As we worked into the ranges even these disappeared. All that was left us were the creeping willows and trailing spruces that, with snowshoes as shovels, and on hands and knees, we burrowed for.

But the fifth day the hills around us changed to long, curving slopes, with shallow saucers of valleys between them. The valleys, moreover, inclined toward the east, which meant (said Nero) that we had reached the point where the water "him go Ungava Bay."

Toward nightfall we reached the crest of the last big hill. To eastward, far below us, lay miles and miles of snow-smoking plain, the chaotic face of it sprinkled with multitudes of boulders which stood out of the satiny waste like pin points of jet. The blur of horizon was broken here and there by solitary hills. While we gazed and debated upon what valley to descend, the snow smoke settled down and the middle distance resolved itself into paralleling threads that wound and twisted around a sweep of ice whose far horizon was a landless rim—the ice, said Nero, of Kasegaleek, the great seal lake of the Eskimos.

For four days we continued eastward over the ice of Kasegaleek. The only break in the monotony of low, barren granite shores was the skeleton of a tepee frame—a gaunt silhouette against the sky—an old camp of Indians who used to come here in the few short weeks of summer from their own hunting grounds within the limit of trees, far southward. At another place Nero pointed out the spot where, when he

was a boy, his father had made a deer kill—so many, said he, that it had taken three days to cut them up. Here as everywhere through the great interior, Nero continued, the Eskimos used to come in from the coast in the early spring, on the watch for migrations as they worked north from the Indian's land of trees. Sometimes there were so many that if one put his ear to the ground he could hear them. "Him sound like thunder, very; but now," lamented Nero, "deer, him gone. Huskie—him starve."

He spoke of three families who, several winters before, had struck out from the Koksoak across the interior for Hudson Bay—"Nobody see 'um no more."

Over the winding arms and bays of Kasegaleek, on the evening of the fourth day we came to the point which Nero said marked the lake's halfway. This was, as we had arranged, the place where Nero and his team would turn back, being the extreme point to which we could economically continue with both teams. We took stock of our supplies and dogs. As to the supplies we had no concern, but the teams were failing. They must get red meat. Nero proposed that Omarolluk and he take three days off, deer-hunting in the hills inland, while Wetunik cut down in the ice for fish. But three days of hunting and four holes through seven feet of ice failed to yield us the meat of which the dogs stood so much in need.

Notwithstanding the situation, Omarolluk and Wetunik were willing enough to continue. Omarolluk argued that, though the team were lean and impoverished, the last three days of inaction had rested them; moreover, the worst of the going—the coastal ranges—was over, and from now on,

through Kasegaleek and down the unknown river to the sea, would be the easiest going of the journey. Not only that, but there would be always the chance for fish wherever a rapid might be open; then surely somewhere along its long winding course we must come across the trail of some little band of deer. Of the twenty-three dogs available Omarolluk culled thirteen and took all the food supply from Nero's sledge, save enough to enable Nero to return to Great Whale. Through the early hours of our last night together we sewed boots and broken gear and mended harness, with speculations now and then as to the character of the country that lay ahead. With Nero's help I retouched my vocabulary, for the extent of my Eskimo was such as "Make the fire," "Which way is the wind?" and those most-used phrases of all, "I am hungry" and "Is it far?"

At daylight Nero struck out for distant Great Whale and Omarolluk, Wetunik and I for Ungava Bay. We had a cold, hard day's work of it; then, at camping time, that which we had taken for the lake's main body we found to be nothing but a long bay, and the head of it a barrier of steep granite hills. Through all the following day, as drifting and as cold, we retraced our steps, camping at nightfall on the spot where we had taken leave of Nero two days before.

For three days we continued northeast over Kasegaleek, across the mouths of multitudes of mysterious bays that led God knows where, through flocks of rocks of islands, over long traverses and through narrows in steep granite hills. And everywhere the rims of frozen lake and the profiles of the ranges were blurred by the smoking snow. We lost hours, huddled for shelter within the sledge-load's lee, wait-

ing while Omarolluk scouted among the hills. The sleeping dogs were often drifted over before he signalled his three shots for us to come on.

On the evening of the fourth day, rime, spiralling in the acid air, and the vivid green of an open rapid, marked Kasegaleek's end and the beginning of an unknown river's long career to sea. "Here is the place for fish," thought I, as we drew up alongside, "with nothing like the cutting of seven-foot holes through Kasegaleek's thick hide to stand in the way." Omarolluk thought so too; so we camped near by.

A day we spent trolling and watching, spears in hand, but not a sign of fish did we see. There were constant reminders of the hunger of the team. They fought like demons over their corn meal and tallow. With whips and snowshoes and clubs we kept them from annihilating one poor brute that for two days past had been slowly breaking. Omarolluk shook his head as he swept a hand across its ribs.

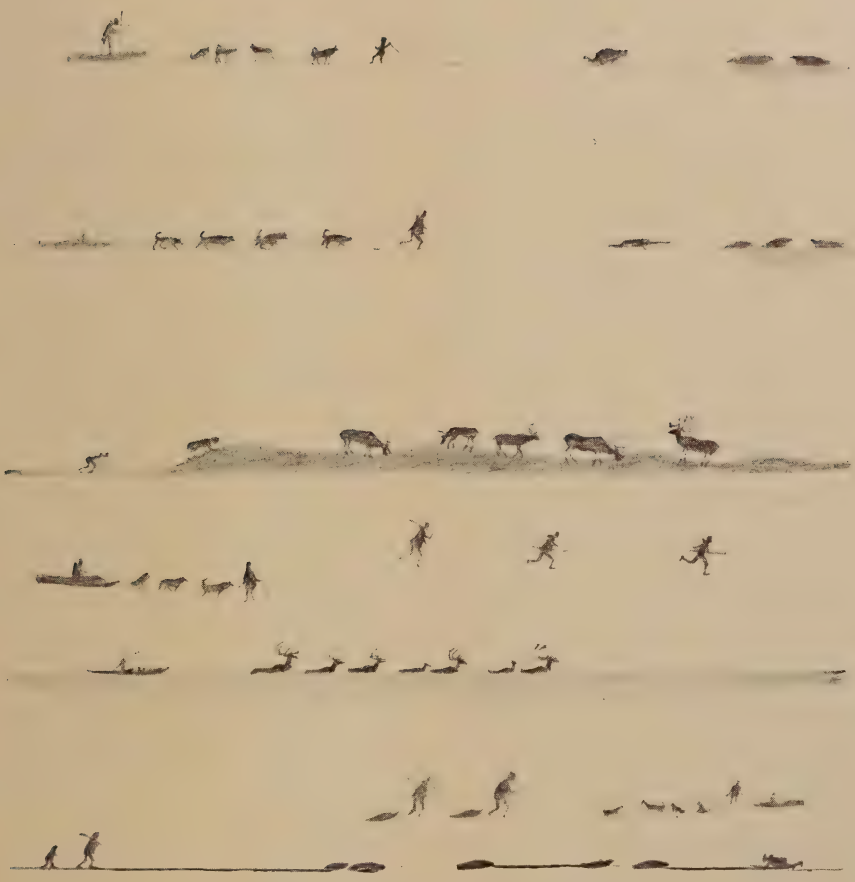
For three days we slowly followed the loops and turns of the river. There was but one interest, a covey of ptarmigan, the first life we had seen all the way in from Hudson Bay. We came upon them so suddenly that there was no time to use a gun. Whip in hand, Omarolluk crept toward them. The whip trailed out behind him. Foot by foot he approached. The covey broke. Forward like a shot the long six-fathom lash flashed through the air. The covey flew up and sailed over the shoulder of a hill—but where Omarolluk's lash had flattened out lay a ptarmigan, dead upon the snow.

The trough-like valley of the river deepened as we went on, with big flanks of granite hills rising steeply at either

hand. The stunted trees that wound in a straggling line along their forefeet emphasized the chaotic desolation that loomed above them. Now and then the bluster of March winds blocked out the hills and the view ahead, and forced us to fall, groping, close in to shore. There were bad breaks, too, in the slow-going underfoot, giving way at one never-to-be-forgotten point to a frozen rapid nine miles long. Sheer walls on either hand forced us into troughs, deep pits and gouges. The rough-and-tumble played out the dogs. When Omarolluk and Wetunik returned from a fruitless day's search for deer, hardly one of them had energy enough left to break out from its blanket of drifted snow. Their day and night's rest did them little good, for when we started on the journey once more we could hardly urge them on. The leader, at one time the jauntiest dog we had, finally lay down and refused to rise, but whined and licked her aching paws when we drew near. Omarolluk unharnessed her, and she rode lashed aboard the sledge.

Constantly our eyes roved for signs of game, scanning the nooks and crannies of the drift-swept hills and the grooves of valleys that among them wound down to the river's shore, and among the straggling clumps of spectral trees; but on all that hopelessness of white and gray all that lived and breathed and moved were our own black dots, bending slowly over the loops and curves of that endless stream.

The day deepened to a gloom of gray. The drift thickened before a rising wind. Omarolluk halted the team. Standing up on the sledge load he scanned the shoreline for signs of camping ground. Suddenly he jumped down. On his hands and knees he began brushing away the newly drifted



ESKIMO HUNTING SCENES

As sketched by Wetalltok. The upper two sketches show two hunters and their dogs approaching seals on the ice. The next lower drawings show hunters creeping up on caribou. The lower sketch shows the end of a successful seal hunt.

snow. He beckoned me near. "Fresh deer tracks!" cried he, "and not far from here." By pantomime he made me understand that they were sure to be yarded in some deep valley among the hills. Telling Wetunik and me to keep on to the first good camping ground, he unlashed his rifle and struck out westward across the river. In a moment he was swallowed by the drift, bent on what seemed to me a hope forlorn. Wetunik and I camped a mile onward within the meagre shelter of some stumps of trees. The dogs fed their lean ration, and our meal of beans and bacon and tea cooked and eaten, we waited through the long hours of the night, to the tune of the soughing wind among the trees and the complaining whines of the hungry team.

Sometime in the monotony of it all we fell asleep. The dogs, frantic with excitement, wakened us. The while we rubbed our eyes came the crunching of Omarolluk's steps. I reached out for the stove—for that Omarolluk was cold and hungry was all that entered my mind—when the door opened and he crawled in. His face was wreathed in smiles.

"Tooktoo," said he, and advanced his three fingers before our incredulous eyes. Whilst we plied him with beans and sea-biscuit and scalding tea, he pantomimed his story with all the details of the hunt. None of us had any thought of sleep. As soon as the team could be harnessed he and Wetunik struck out to bring in the kill. It was long after daylight before they came back; and though one of the team had been killed by his fellows at the feast, two happier and more contented mortals than Wetunik and Omarolluk were never seen. All through the day and night that followed they gorged and slept, and gorged again.

II

WITH a spanking team before us, lunging and eager to get on, we made miles in one day that had taken two before. There were flocks of ptarmigan here and there among the stunted willows along the banks. At one lunch ground a whisky-jack hopped around us while we dined, begging for all the bacon rinds and biscuit crumbs we could spare.

Each new bend of the river led off to wider and longer sweeps, and the ranges grew in grandeur at either hand. At one point we came to the mouth of a large tributary stream—an artery leading through what labryinths of rivers, lakes, and streams into regions mysteriously far, even the oldest of the present generation of Eskimos do not know.

As the sun gained in strength the snow became scintillating like the dust of powdered diamonds. It raised havoc with our eyes, in spite of goggles. For two days Wetunik's eyes were altogether blind. All of one day he rode full length on the sledge, shielding them with folded arms.

We had hardly settled into our stride for the journey one bright blue morning, when Omarolluk halted the team and pointed to a terrace of marine gravel plastered like a railway grading, high up among the hills. "We are near the sea," said he. With every mile the river valley widened and the hills became still more bold. Reaches of river opened up, beyond which we could see the blue haze of far-

off shores. The days were glorious—blue skies and wads of cotton for clouds, and what wind there was, warm and soft, carried spring in its arms. On the tenth of April we came face to face with a gigantic pile of rafted ice. "Tiahoke—the sea!" exclaimed the men. The ice, however, seemed impassable, but so were the beetling shores which hemmed us in. For three days we climbed and tumbled and chopped and wriggled our way through it. We fed the dogs on frozen beans and sacrificed our grub boxes for fuel enough to boil tea. As the tides buoyed it up and down, the groaning and rifle-cracking of the ice upon which we slept resounded the long nights through.

When morning came, we climbed the highest ice on the lookout for a course beyond the welter of stuff that lay ahead. What we saw was open water in the distance, and floes packing with the wind. Up and over the shoreline, which now, however, was not so steep, was the only way. We climbed the hill in stages never more than two hundred feet at a time. The dogs almost played out before we reached the crest, but Omarolluk, going ahead some hundred feet, would lie down on the flat of his back and with his hands and legs moving erratically in the air, imitate the flippers of a basking seal. As Nero would put it, "Dogs, him come."

Six hundred feet above the sea, a vast panorama lay outspread below us, the blue and white of Ungava Bay some thirty miles away, in the middle-ground the tangled skein of the shorelines of Leaf Gulf. There were islands of strangely familiar form, table-topped, grotesquely slanting, as if they were about to topple into the sea. "Kokrak, tiamitow!"

(they are like the islands of the Great Whale coast) exclaimed Omarolluk; and so they were, the formations identical with the iron-bearing formations of the Nastapoka and Belcher islands—the link I had hoped to find between Low's discoveries of the interior some hundred miles southward and his later discoveries three hundred miles northward on Ungava Bay.

We coasted down to sea, two miles of it, the team galloping in wild career, frantic lest our ponderous sledge overrun their flying heels. Across the gulf we crawled, through deep snow almost molten in the warm rays of the April sun. By nightfall we reached the gulf's east coast. Some hundred miles now intervened between us and our journey's end; but the route thither was overland, for the coast of Ungava Bay, owing to its enormous tides, is impassable. We knew that there must be a sledge route to Fort Chimo. This Omarolluk was most anxious to find; otherwise we might spend several days in reconnaissance. We spent hours cross-sectioning likely places where were old camp signs, often on hands and knees brushing away a mantle of newly fallen snow. But no sledge tracks could we discover.

When morning broke, soft and warm, we were up early and breakfasting on bannock, tea, and beans, wondering the while what the day's work would bring, when we heard the startling sound of voices—"Chimo—o! chimo—o!" Two old women came toward us, waddling like penguins through the snow. Thinking we were Eskimos from somewhere northward along the Ungava coast, not until they were close up did they realize their mistake. Astonishment held them in their tracks. Exclaiming over and over their

wonder and surprise, haltingly they came into the camp. Omarolluk gave them big mugs of tea and sea biscuit. Soon we were like old friends. What palavering then went on! "Yes," they said in answer to the one question uppermost in Omarolluk's and Wetalltok's minds, "the big tooktoo [deer] hunt is on; even now they are migrating across the Koksoak, and yes, many of them, herds and herds—like the boulders upon land." When we struck out the men's faces beamed at the prospect which to them was the climax to our journey.

It was up hill and down dale to Fort Chimo, over ribs of bare rock hills, winding through boulder-strewn valleys, and across small, solitary disks of lakes, or over chains of them strung out like beads among the folds of hills. We breasted a drifter the second day out, so thick we could hardly make out the leader of the team. Wetunik, his leg lamed the day before, followed limping behind the slow-moving sledge. Near camp time we reached the crest of a long, steep hill. The dogs broke into galloping; the sledge shot after them down through the drift-filled air. When we reached level ground, the sledge ahead and the yelping dogs ploughing after, no Wetunik could we see. Crawling into the lee of the sledge load we huddled for shelter and waited for him to come on. Minutes dragged into hours. At intervals Omarolluk fired the usual three rounds from his Winchester into the blanket of driving snow. It was useless to double back on the trail, which now was blotted by the drift. Darkness crowded through the storm; and, knowing that the least of Wetunik's portion was a meagre shelter behind some boulder or an improvised cavern in the snow, gloomily we

made camp, crawled into our bags, and sank into sleep. Daylight had hardly come when the crunch of footsteps wakened us. Sheepishly Wetunik trudged into camp. Chagrin underlay his smiling mask as he explained, between gobbles of biscuit and gulps of tea, that he had spent the night just beyond a hill not a mile away.

Our last day broke calm and warm and clear. By noon we picked up some solitary trees. "Fort Chimo," said Omarolluk as he eyed them, "is near." Even the dogs seemed to know what the end of this long-desired day would bring. The long fan of their traces never sagged. We ran into the fresh trail of some post team. Amid a din of howling, the dogs lunged ahead. We came to a break in the level void of plain, and the great Koksoak came into view. On its farthest shore stood out Fort Chimo—rows of white cabins, from whose windows the evening sun reflected bolts of fire which shone like bloodspots on the snow.

The factor, his apprentice, and I had hardly finished breakfasting the following morning, when the post interpreter knocked on the door and announced that Omarolluk was most anxious to see me. "He says, sir," the interpreter began, when I had joined them, "that what he wants for you to know is about them deer; how he only killed three; and now, sir, he wants to give you an account of them other two deer. First he knowed, sir he says, is when he stalked them deer where they was yarded from the storm. On account of the storm he gets close up on them and a-crawlin' through the snow, and then he aims at what is easy hittin', sir; but his bullets goes wide—the first up and over and the next

low, cuttin' through the snow. 'Twas only luck, sir, what made him get even three deer, and mighty glad he was he got 'em, sir—for what happened was this: you handed him the wrong cartridges, the t'irty-t'irty's, which as you knows, sir, is too loose for a Winchester t'ree-o-t'ree."

III

THE glamour of the post and the hospitality their admiring friends heaped upon them were not to stand in the way of the great hunt Omarolluk and Wetunik had looked forward to so long. One day a score of Eskimos came into the post, their sledges piled high with the carcasses of deer from the big kill up on the Koksoak. That was enough. Within the day they were off on the deer hunt of their lives. During the fortnight they were gone I returned with the post driver and team and explored the iron ore formation find we had made on Leaf Gulf. My exploration, handicapped by the rapidly melting ice and snow, was without result. Further exploration, for a possible extension of the iron ore formation northward of Leaf Gulf, had to be left until open water.

Followed a long month of inaction waiting for the break-up. The old weather prophets of the post said they had never seen the winter last so long. For days the mile-wide expanse of river ice, though rotten enough to keep us from trips afield, showed no sign of breaking. To scan and speculate over its drab gray mass was the beginning and end of every day. The days dragged on. We had almost given up talking break-up, when an Eskimo, his shouts resounding, came running to our door. Servants, Eskimos, and Indians were gathering along the banks while a lookout from the cross trees of the post's flag mast pointed toward the river's

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NYLA

far bend downstream. With our glasses we made out a long blue lane of open water, and pans of ice slowly twisting and turning and sailing away. Then for two days a tumultuous army floated by—miles and miles of ice, raftering and rearing and overriding as it fought its way to sea.

On the heels of the ice came Indians in canoes from their "land of little sticks"—swampy Crees from the far southwest over toward Hudson Bay, and Nascopies from as far the other way, the Atlantic slope of Labrador. Unlike the more prosaic and more sophisticated Crees, the Nascopies were a wild and primitive throng. Their whitish tan deerskin leggings and capotes were set off in the geometric Nascopie designs of vivid red and blue. Tall and lank and straight as the straightest tree, they strode with swinging hips, their heads held high—finely chiselled masks almost buried in their shoulder-long hair. The Crees, whom through the interpreter I approached for information as to a route by canoe for my return to Hudson Bay, said that even now there was bad going upstream—an ice jam two days away and behind it miles of floating ice.

To make a long story short, I abandoned my long-laid plan of returning with Omarolluk and Wetunik by canoe to the Great Whale coast; for the short summer would be half over before I reached it, and there would be no time left to attempt another crossing to Wetalltok's islands. Reluctantly enough we made our separate plans: Omarolluk and Wetunik to return to their anxious wives at Great Whale, and myself with Fort Chimo Eskimos to strike off northward through new country. The post people, the servants, the Crees, the Nascopies, and the Eskimos crowded about the

landing to see Omarolluk and Wetunik go—Wetunik with his beloved bob-tailed dog (one of the staunchest of our team) crouched in the bow, then Omarolluk with a young boy of eight years before him, whom he explained to me he had adopted since his wife gave him none but girls, settled in the stern. As admiring friends began calling out farewell, they dug down into their pockets and fetched forth what seemed to be two balls of red cotton rags. Impressively they unwound them; and when some yard or more of cotton had been reeled off, what lay in their hands were two trade watches which I had given them as presents the day before. "Ah!" said everyone. Of course they could not tell the time, but carefully they compared them to see that they agreed; then more carefully still wrapped their treasures up, waved to us with their paddles, and shoved off.

Eskimo hunters coming up river by kayak reported the coast ice-free—an ice condition in Ungava Bay as early as the Koksoak was late. This turn of fortune opened up a new and more interesting plan, a traverse of the peninsula northward of the one I had just completed from Ungava Bay to Hudson Bay. This traverse would open up a representative section of the unexplored area remaining.

Overnight I decided upon the attempt. The little post of Fort Chimo hummed (if a fur post ever can hum) with active preparations. The factors of both posts, Hudson's Bay and Revillon's, vied with one another to help with the outfitting. The Hudson's Bay people gave me one Nuckey, their best man, and Nawri, and young Ahegeek, son of old Ahegeek, who was chief of his tribe, and Ambrose, son of the Dog Woman. From trade canvas secured from Revillon's a

native seamstress fashioned a fly-proof tent, sewing every seam of it with the sinew of a deer. My food supply —beans, bacon, dried fruit, jerked deer meat, sugar, tobacco, and tea—was estimated to be sufficient to last the five of us two months. The canoe was a huge Peterboro, twenty-five feet long, capable of a load of forty-five hundred pounds—one that the Revillon factor had imported some years before for a party of Nascopie packeteers for use in the big rapids of the Koksoak. The Indians, however, refused to use it. A "man-killer," they called it, too heavy for the portages; so for years it had lain idle in the loft of the fur post. It was just the kind of craft we needed, however; big enough to weather the seas along the hundreds of miles of sea coast we must travel.

Curious Crees and long-haired Nascopies; fur-clad Eskimos and post half-breeds in capotes and scarlet sashes; servants, wives, babes, and children, stood at the edge of the banks. Farewells were soon over. The Indians shook with laughter when Nuckey and his three men, bearing the "man-killer" on their shoulders, passed them by. We climbed aboard the *Walrus*, a diminutive sloop of open hold and twenty-nine feet of keel. She was already loaded rails down —four Eskimo hunters, their wives and children and dogs, and a yelping litter of pups. Within two hours we were standing out on the glass calm of Ungava Bay. Through the gray twilight of the night we drifted aimlessly with the tide, all but the helmsman, Nuckey, the nest of puppies, and myself stretched out asleep on deck or in the hold.

For two days we sailed slowly along before light catspaws of wind, the hunters scooting like water bugs in their kayaks

ahead of us, on the alert for seal. The coast was low, desolate—long fangs of points reaching for miles out to sea; flocks of bare rock islands, and over them gigantic blocks of sea ice, gleaming white and green, lying stranded by the enormous fall of tide. When the tide flooded in (a rise of forty feet) the islands were erased from view and the blocks of ice floated willy-nilly on the sea. On the third day low clouds came scudding out of the east, where an ice blink loomed in the sky. "Seeco—the ice," said Nuckey, and we altered our course toward land. Great white lumps of bergs, resplendent in the ethereal light of the low-hanging sun, came sailing in majestically with the ice pack from sea. Before the day was over we were prisoners on a small, high rock of island. The ice raftered in a gigantic ring around us. For three days gales of wind blew out of the east, until it seemed that the ice from all the North Atlantic, the boom and slosh and rasp of it resounding, was crowding in.

When the gale died down, the sea was a solid mass of ice; but soon the ebb and flow of tide opened lanes that wound like ribbons through it. Through them we made our way, the kayaks signalling where to follow. Often a day's journeying, winding as we did, covered but a few miles as the crow flies. Often we were caught on some bleak little island and held prisoners there for days on end.

Finally we reached the wide, open arms of Payne Bay. At the head of it, where the Payne debouches over a multitude of boulder channels to the sea, the *Walrus* reached her journey's end. Here all hands debarked, and camp was made on shore amid a confusion of sea-drenched garments outspread on boulders to dry. Within two days the women's work of

mending boots and garments, and our work of repairing outfit and going over food, were done, and the "man-killer" stood loaded and waiting offshore. Then came the last farewells among the good friends around. They climbed to the hills and watched us until we were buried in the winding of the unknown stream.

A splendid river is the Payne, larger than the Gatineau of the Ottawa River system in Lower Canada.[1] Enchanting pictures were the great terrace-strung slopes at either hand, towering hundreds of feet above us. Here and there were white streaks and bridal veils of torrents cascading down. The narrow level plains along the river's edge were carpeted with tan and russet mosses, and flowers purple, white, and yellow—solid banks of colour, with bees and butterflies among them. Haunting it was and mysteriously beautiful in the ethereal light of those low northern suns.

There never was a more happy or carefree crew than we five. Banter, smiles, and laughter were our stock in trade. Day and night to us were almost the same, and there was no watch to space them. We ate and slept when we willed.

One day as we sailed along with a light draft of wind behind us Nawri, in an astonished voice, suddenly called: "Innuet! Innuet!" For the moment I could hardly believe my eyes, for an Eskimo in this place, of all places, was the last thing I dreamed of seeing. Where Nawri pointed I made out a kayak quickly scooting out from shore to an island rock. As we drew nearer we saw the kayaker peering

[1]The Payne was named by Low when he explored its mouth during his exploration of the west coast of Ungava Bay in 1898. (See A. P. Low: Report on an Exploration of Part of the South Shore of Hudson Strait and of Ungava Bay, Report L of *Annual Rept. Geol. Survey of Canada*, vol. XI for 1898, Ottawa, 1901.)

at us from behind a screen of boulders on the island's crest. At shouting range Nawri called "Chimo." He stood up then and in a queer tremulous voice answered. It was plain he did not know what to make of us; but soon, reassured, he paddled alongside and became quite happy when the men explained our presence. As we neared his encampment he called out to his huddled family, jokingly, something about the Adelite (Indian) coming. For even to this day is the Indian dreaded. This native, whose name was Gwack, together with his family, a grown-up son, two wives, a grandmother, some half-dozen small children, an army of dogs, and a tame sea gull tied by a thong, was living on the Arctic salmon resources of the river near by. A plentiful supply, cleaned and split, was spread about on the ground curing in the sun.

The one dependable source of food supply for the natives who travel the interior in summer is fish, particularly the *namaycush*, the great lake trout, and a finer-eating fish does not exist. We caught them up to four feet in length with cod hooks, baited with pork and red flannel, so easily that we had no occasion to use our nets during the entire journey.

Nawri mentioned that Gwack was a Great Whale River Eskimo and that he had through the preceding months of winter hunted his way to the Payne with dogs and sledge through the waterways of the interior. From Great Whale River to this point seemed to me a hazardous journey, as he would have to take circuitous courses and fish through the ice for food. Far journeys have been made by criminal Eskimos, fleeing from the vengeance of their fellows, and Gwack's presence here, a hundred miles beyond the habita-

tion of his people, seemed strongly indicative of something irregular. Nor did he look at all incapable of it. He was bald to the ears—the only bald native I have ever seen—which, combined with his sinister, weather-scarred mask, made him not a prepossessing object.

Ten days on from Gwack's encampment, ice lay stranded along either shore—a sure sign that there was ice still remaining in the big lakes of the interior. We came to where the river divided. The southern fork, the larger, is the outlet of the great lake, Teeseriuk. Said Nawri: "If there is ice in the lakes before us, in the great Teeseriuk we shall be sure to find more of it—enough, perhaps, to block our way; whereas [tracing a map of both forks in the sand before him] if we ascend the northern fork we shall probably find the lakes both small and shoal, and consequently find less ice." I was keenly disappointed not to descend the lower fork, for Teeseriuk, if what the Eskimos who have one time hunted there say is true, is a vast body of water, the largest in all Ungava—"four days' fast kayaking," said Nawri, "before one sees the western end. The waves when the wind blows hard are big, almost like the sea, and too, in winter the ice rafts and fissures like the tiahoke seeco [sea ice.]" That Teeseriuk is probably one of the great lakes of northeastern Canada I have no doubt.

Ice or no ice, what we did encounter in the ascent of the north fork could hardly have been more difficult. The stream, narrowing to nothing more than a V-shaped trough, was for miles on end a white race of water. Our tracking ground was a treacherous surface of ten-foot banks of ice that had been stranded alongshore by the fall of the river

following the break-up some few weeks before. Three tracked the "man-killer" while Nawri, standing in the stern, worked her nose around the shoals and boulders and blocks of stranded ice. There was one rapid draw so swift that Nawri and I had to bend with the men to the tracking-line, whilst the "man-killer," awash to her gunwales, came on by inches.

For three days we toiled. We had begun to believe that the white water would never end. Came the swiftest stretch of all. We were almost over it, when our stout seal-skin tracking-line, catching against a sharp-edged boulder, snapped in two. The "man-killer," with our all in all inside her, swung broadside on and went off galloping down-stream. Pell-mell we raced along the ice banks. Coming to where the river doubled around a point, Nawri jumped in to his waist, and balancing himself with his paddle, barely caught the dangling end of the tracking-line as the "man-killer" swept by.

Larger and larger were the banks of winter snow. They enhanced the melancholy of the boulder-strewn hills and plains. Finally we came into a region where the river became nothing but short links to multitudes of lakes and lonely, God-forsaken ponds, so shoal that one could almost wade across them. The colourless, long-sloped country around them matched their tone of leaden gray. Often we launched out from some toilsome portage upon what we felt sure was a paddle of at least an hour's length, only to find ourselves out on shore again within a mile. On the seventeenth of July we reached the point where our one-time formidable stream was nothing but a frothing creek. Said

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NYLA and CHILD

Eteeveemuit Eskimo of Cape Dufferin

Nawri: "We are near the height of land. My father used to say that the Eskimos from the western sea [Hudson Bay] came in here where these rivers begin; so the river they ascended cannot be far away."

We decided in the morning to go off in different directions, each of us on the lookout for the beginning of a river that would lead us down to Hudson Bay.

While we were pitching camp, thick lowering banks of cloud, that all day long had been slowly gathering in the sky and hanging low over the gloom of valleys and far-off hills, began twisting in the rising wind. Loons, far and near, called out wildly as they flew like rockets through the air. The wind grew stronger. It scattered our precious supper fire to the four points of the compass; and then, like regiments, came walls of rain. We crawled supperless into camp. There was no let-up through the night. When we wakened in the morning, thick wet snow was flying through the air. For the next two days we were prisoners within the cramped, flapping shelter of the tent. Cold water and sea biscuit was our food, for the moss, sole source of fuel, was sodden through. The moss-carpeted ground under us was like a sponge, and there was no heat to dry wet clothes and blankets; but as ever the crew were full of jokes and banter.

On the third day the storm was gone, and a soft yellow sun from low down in the north enwrapped the snow-swept hills and plain. By overturning large boulders we secured great armfuls of moss. In the open end, over a fireplace of cobblestones, we took turns at blowing the flame which must be constantly fed, since the moss burned almost as rapidly as paper. The smoke, pungent as that of burn-

ing rags, filled our dripping eyes; but, though the moss smoke had strongly flavoured them, we had warmed our beans and boiled our beloved tea.

All through the next day we scouted through wet, ankle-deep snow for signs of a route. At nightfall, as Nuckey and I were tramping back toward camp, we fell in with Nawri, who was carrying the weathered blade of an old kayak paddle. He knew by the shape of it, he said, that it was the fragment of a paddle used by the Eskimos from Hudson Bay. He came to their old camp signs too, he continued, by the bank of a westward-flowing stream. If we portaged down, he was sure we would come to the little lake-beginning of the route we desired so much to find. For two days we portaged on, over soft, yielding mossy ground where our steps weighed like lead, and over acres of big, close-packed boulders. We made two trips on every portage—one with the outfit (the loads ranged from 150 to Nawri's 250 pounds) and one with the well-named "man-killer," which came belly-up on the aching shoulders of the crew. The third day, launched on a man-sized stream, we were whipping our paddles toward the western sea. The boulder-strewn desolation of the height of land gave way to higher and higher hills. The tawn and russet mosses of the spoons of valleys that lay between shone like velvet in the soft yellow of the sun. Everywhere were old camp signs of deer-hunting Eskimos of generations gone by. We saw old deer trails, worn in the solid bed-rock, where countless thousands must have passed, and near them boulder blinds where the hunters had lain in wait for them; and at one point, as we swung into a new bend of stream, I saw what seemed to be a herd of

grazing deer. They were merely decoys—two big boulders, the small one atop the large, spread out on the distant plain.

Lakes innumerable, large and small, linked our ever-growing stream. On the larger lakes, choked as they were with islands, the outlets took hours of paddling and climbing into the hills to find. One day we swept, tumbling over a mile-long canyon, into the arms of another and impressively larger stream. There were fewer but larger lakes from now on—one lake so long that its far horizon was a faint blue line. It was still half-filled with the winter's ice, but we could always pick out some blue lane to follow through. There was now no longer the melancholy gloom of lowering skies. The purple, white, and yellow banks of flowers, the gray knobs of hills, the russet sweeps of plain, and the green emerald of the great river, were vibrant in the air. Fish—great, red-fleshed trout, sometimes more than four feet long—we caught whenever we wanted them. Winds from the east followed unfailingly, and where the glorious river ran white we could usually jump the "man-killer" through, two or three miles of it sometimes, the wind cutting our faces, the white-and-black bottom of sand and boulders a blur as we sped by.

By the receded sea beaches along the river banks and the appearance of clumps of stunted willows, we knew when we were nearing Hudson Bay. The higher hills we often climbed for a view of it, but gleaming loops of river were all that we could see. The first day of August at noon we left the wallowing seas of a big lake expansion and slipped into the shelter of its outlet, the river. Within a mile the river broke into heavy rapids. Once over the draw, like a shot

the "man-killer" was drawn down. Came shouts and yells from the bowsman. The crew joined in. Were we trapped, about to ride to eternity over the brink of some giant fall? More wildly they yelled; they paddled like madmen. Swimming down the rapid was a half-grown goose. What a race between that God-forsaken gosling and the frenzied crew! The "man-killer," swinging broadside-on, came within an ace of filling. By the time we had swung her round we had shot from the rapid's tail into a still, clear pool. We were laughing still over the goose chase, when Nawri pointed to some sea-weed near shore. We glided slowly around a point. Before us lay the sea. We tasted the water to make sure.

We struck north along the coast. Before the hour was out we saw the last of the great Povungnituk, one of the greatest rivers in all Labrador.[1] Within ten miles we found what we had hoped for—the topeks of some Eskimos. Scurrying figures, obviously apprising their occupants of our arrival, were sharply silhouetted against the sky. They disappeared as we drew near. Only the dogs crawled about, or lay asleep on the ground. Inquiringly I turned to Nawri. "Innuet immaitame," he replied (the custom of the people). "Innuet ho ho!" he called out, as the "man-killer" grounded on the beach. Embarrassingly long was the interval that followed before a tent flap flew open and an old Eskimo, rubbing his eyes, came slowly out. Every tent door opened then, and men, women, babes, and children were soon crowding around us. We pitched camp amongst them, and gave

[1]Its volume is nearly equal to the Ottawa, the largest tributary of the St. Lawrence (See Report on Exploration of East Coast of Hudson Bay, A. P. Low, Volume XIII, for 1900, Ottawa, 1902.)

them tobaccomik and tea. They shared with us berries, salmon freshly killed and the eggs of eiders. On the floor of the largest topek I spread out my map of the coast of Hudson Bay and they traced with their fingers and told us where we might find driftwood and where there might be camps of Eskimos. What pleased us most of all was their assurance that there was no more ice—everywhere the coast was clear.

Northward along the desolate boulder-strewn waste of low-lying country; across the mouths of narrow, deep, winding bays; and in amongst small rocks of islands, we made our way. When we pitched camp at nightfall we found, as the friendly Eskimos had said, enough driftwood for fire—the first real warm fire since far-off Ungava Bay. We hovered round it half through the night. Morning came, calm, clear, and so warm that we had no mind for paddling. The seals kept bobbing up around us, and there were schools of white whales playing near the shoals offshore, and school after school of steel and silver salmon scurrying from under our canoe. The crew were like a crowd of boys, bubbling with excitement, exclaiming their "ayee's" as these golden treasures passed by. All day long we half paddled, half drifted, on the overwhelming blue of the sea around us—blue and still as the sky. The paralleling thread of coastline fell away. The nearest coast now lay ahead some four miles to northward. Night came on. We headed toward the distant shore. We took our time, for there was driftwood aboard with which to build another great fire. Our beds would be on the moss beside it. We paddled on, unconcerned. But as the night deepened a wind rose. It cut our faces. We strained through the

gloom toward the shadow which was land. The wind blew harder. We dug in, Nawri's "kiyee! kiyee!" stroking us. Big seas broke hard over the "man-killer's" nose. We were fighting for inches, when above the piping of the wind, the smash of water and the din of paddles thumping on the gunwales, we heard the wash of surf. Soon we made the lee of land.

IV

THOUGH the wind still was strong, by morning it blew offshore. We sailed on. By nightfall the colossal form of Cape Smith, wrapped in haze, lay prostrate across the thin line of coast. On its crest, one thousand eight hundred feet half-sheer from sea, died the last yellow shaft of sun. We were camped on a moss sward of shore, gathered around a great roaring driftwood fire, when from out of the darkness came three Eskimos. They stood frozen in their tracks when they saw myself—the kablunak—and around me strange Eskimos. But in a few moments Nawri had us all to rights, and with a steaming kettle of tea before us we were grouped happily around the fire.

"Yes," their spokesman said, "the sea ice, only two sleeps ago, an east wind swept to sea; so all of the way to the big land to the north [that is, Cape Wolstenholme] the coast is clear." With Nawri they went over my map and showed me where there might be camp grounds of other Eskimos; but driftwood, said they, we would not be likely from now on to find. Never did Eskimo so quickly gulp down the few scraps of food we had to spare, and the tobaccomik and tea we gave them they held close with trembling hands, when finally they bade us "chimo" and strode off through the gloom.

Again the sky was cold and lowering. The wind following

blew strong. The "man-killer" had all she could do to mount the seas. We reefed the leg-o'-mutton. A bawling wake wound out astern. The leg-o'-mutton, swaying grotesquely, frightened flocks of gulls that, flapping from the nearby reefs, wheeled over us in the air. By noon the coast hung out over us—gigantic tapestries mottled green, russet, and terra cotta, veined and interveined with milk-and-yellow quartz, one thousand feet to where they met the gray sky. The strata upon strata of white dots which stood out against them were gulls. The green seas were clotted here and there with sea pigeons, and eiders in black swarms like flies circled us. Among the rocks of one talus slope lay a splotch of white—a dead Arctic fox, so Nawri said, fallen from the cliff whilst poaching.

Mile upon mile the speck of us sailed. Wilder were the seas. Puffs and squalls swooped straight down. The threshing leg-o'-mutton shook the "man-killer" as a terrier shakes a bone. Came a break in the clouds in the angry west, and the sun as it was sinking broke out. Like a searchlight it raked through the gloom. But nowhere was there a landing; no niche, no talus slope, nor even a projecting ledge big enough to land the "man-killer" on. The dirge of the sea throbbing through the cliffs; the wild, weird calling of the sea fowl; and the roaring of the wind—we had all but given up hope, when Nawri in the bow shot up and with his paddle pointed ahead. The helmsmen—it took two of them to hold her—swung the "man-killer's" nose. She waddled for a moment, until the leg-o'-mutton filled and she shot into the wide-open arms of a tiny cove and rammed her nose full speed upon shore.

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THE WALRUS HUNTER

"We cannot take the omiak farther," said Nawri. A slot of a valley rose in half-sheer steps, winding up to the snow-clad tableland fifteen hundred feet above. The "man-killer," the leg-o'-mutton, all but the clothes we wore, and the last few scraps of food, we reluctantly abandoned to climb the valley, thence over the tablelands to pick our way to what on my map was Eric Cove.

The night was light enough, for all through it welts of red and yellow from the not far-sunken sun stood out in the north. Up half sheer faces of cliffs, on hands and knees scrambling over the talus, and knee-deep through banks of sodden snow we climbed to the tablelands; then on, half bent into the wind, over plains of snow that never disappear, we tramped through darkness. It was midnight when Nawri halted us abruptly. Before us stood a void and down into it wound a tongue of snow, its far end lost in gloom. Down through the snow and on to where it gave way to a wild, roaring stream, on till the cliffs were crowding high, tortuously we picked our way. Finally the ravine widened, the stream smoothed out to long, silent reaches, and before us a single square of yellow light shone through the darkness. "Kablunak!" exclaimed the men.

A more desolate post than Wolstenholme I have never seen. Three sheds of houses stand on a narrow strand between gigantic flanks of bare, ice-scoured hills. Wind, roaring down the flume of valley, blasts them with sand and gravel. At either hand down into the low-lying coast of Hudson Bay, or eastward along the bold, sheer headlands of Hudson Strait, the next two posts of the solitary fur men are hundreds of miles away. But my host, the factor, though

his companions were none save Eskimos and his scanty rations came out of not too various cans, was contented enough. Said he, "Indeed, I enjoys it, sir,"

I had expected that by the time of my arrival the fur ship from England would long since have passed into Hudson Bay. Upon her, outward bound, I planned to take passage to Lower Canada. But no ship had come, none but a whaler ship had been seen from the headlands, working through the ice. The days dragged on. The first week of August came and was gone. No ship had ever been so late. We began to think she never would come; and the prospect of a second winter in the country, at God-forsaken Wolstenholme, was staring me in the face when, on the bright morning of the eighth of August, came the welcome cry: "Omiak! Omiak!"

The "man-killer's" crew followed me down over the sand. We shook hands. They inquired if ever they would see me again—if they did, I should have no journey too long for them to make.

PART IV

FILMS

FILMS

I

ON MY third expedition into the north, in 1913, when we set out from Newfoundland in the *Laddie*, I included in my equipment all the necessary apparatus for making a motion picture film of the Eskimos.

As the reader will remember, from St. John's, Newfoundland, we sailed north along the coast of Labrador to the mouth of Hudson Strait. Owing to the heavy winds which prevailed in the Strait and the lateness of the season we had to abandon our original idea of wintering in Hudson Bay. So we put into the rugged snow-capped coast of Baffin Land.

We cruised over mysterious bays and among tide-washed rocks and craggy islands. The tide, what with its rise and fall of over thirty feet, submerged, as it rose, and laid bare as it fell, numberless reefs. In the first good harbour we anchored ship. On the lookout for Eskimos, with the launch we chugged on through still more groups of islands. The day was almost gone when, clearing the island mask, we came upon big half-sheer cliffs of mainland. We had just about given up hope of seeing Eskimos, when the bowsman pointed toward shore. We made out three topeks.

We called the usual "Chimo! chimo!" A towsly head appeared, and an old woman came out haltingly, holding a naked babe in her arms. We knew then that there were

only women in the camp. Their men, said they, were inland, deer-hunting among the hills. Trade candy, of colours dazzling to the eye, and black plug tobacco went far to break down their reserve. Whilst we lunched on sea biscuit and tea, waiting for the hunters to return, one comely girl—whaler-trained I could see from the spoons, an alarm-clock bell, and big Canadian pennies that dangled on the heel-long tail of her kooletah—brought forth an old accordion, which, bearing the hand-painted label, "Forget-me-not," was evidently the gift of some affectionate whaler lad. She began diffidently enough at first to play. It was not long, however, before she was tearing off "The Campbells are Coming," hornpipes, and the devil's reel, and Gushue, the mate, in his Newfoundland knee-boots of cowhide, was "a-shakin' 'em down" on a granite ledge. In the midst of it the hunters returned. Their eyes sparkled at the prospect of a ship, with its treasure-trove of tobacco, sweets, guns, and tea, come amongst them.

"Yes," said their spokesman, the oldest, "where you are now is the mouth of Amadjuak Bay. At the head of the bay two small rivers flow into the sea, and even now there are Eskimos there, and the camps of half-a-hundred more"—he counted with the fingers of his hand—"are less than a day's kayaking away." They smiled from ear to ear when we told them of the big igloo aboard the ship, which we were to put together and live in for a year.

They were in their kayaks waiting at noon the following day when the *Laddie*, her flags flying, pulled out from the island mask toward them. All of them—their women, babies, and children, their dogs and tents and gear—were

soon aboard. The cook plied them with sea biscuit, lard, and tea, and the gramophone above the rattle and clangour of the engine and the tumult of their and their dogs' voices, poured out minstrel and Harry Lauder songs as the *Laddie*, with as closely packed and happy a throng as any Coney Island boat ever carried, sailed toward the head of Amadjuak Bay.

On the northwest corner of the half-round, rugged head of Amadjuak Bay, we located, for here was not only harbourage, but a small river tumbling with much fuss and pother over a half-mile rapid to sea—fresh water for our film-developing the winter through. "There are Hearne salmon here," said one old Eskimo, "when spawning time begins in spring; and up beyond the rapids lies a little chain of lakes which leads to the great deer country in the interior."

With a will the Eskimos helped us unload. For three days an endless chain of them plied the ship's dories, and their own kayaks catamaraned between ship and shore; while the women, old men, and children lugged and rolled and shouldered the burdens up over the slopes of rock.

Within a week the *Laddie's* work was done, and out over the harbour's face she sailed for Newfoundland.

There was skin ice over the harbour on several snapping clear days before September closed; then open water again through the bluff and bluster of October, which month ended with such a drifter that our launch, anchored bow and stern just offshore, sank to the bottom under the weight and drive of snow. By mid-November winter had settled down, and the hut, snow-walled, was made snug and warm. I chose the families who were to live the winter through in their igloos

around us—one Yew, of long experience with whalers; one Noahasweetow; his son Annunglung; one "Jack Johnson"; three half-grown boys, four wives, one old grandmother, and a flock of children.

Until February we made no film, for there were long sledge trips to make east and west along the coast. During the memorable days when we were in the hut there was much to do. The evenings through there were always guests from the igloos around, come to smoke a pipe, to gossip about their hunting, to listen to "the little box that makes the fine noise"; but most of all to watch our games of billiards which we played on a diminutive quarter-size table, under the yellow light of smoky lamps and rows of flickering candles, ejaculating their "ayee's" and "ah's" and holding their breath while some cue ball slowly rolled its fateful course.

To our Christmas feast Eskimos sledged in from camps two days away—from Fair Ness, from the Isle of God's Mercy, Chorkback, and Markham Bay. While outfitting in Newfoundland, two of the men had been deputed to make up a feast and pack it in a special box marked "Christmas," keeping the contents a secret. Much too slowly December dragged on, and we decreed that the twenty-fifth of December was a mere figure of speech. We elected the fifteenth as the gladsome day.

The billiard table, covered with canvas, was our festive board. The Eskimos dined on less delectable but bulkier fare in the overcrowded kitchen just beyond. Noahasweetow's and Annunglung's wives, uniformed in two old pairs of pajamas over their clothes of deerskin, served the table.

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YOUTHFUL HUNTER

"Jack Johnson" manned the phonograph the while. It was midnight when they all filed out, varicoloured paper hats from Tom Thumb crackers cocked on their happy heads.

February came, cold but glowingly clear and calm. Then we began our films. We did not want for coöperation. The women vied with one another to be starred. Igloo building, conjuring dances, sledging, and seal-hunting were run off as the sunlit days of February and March wore on. Of course there was occasional bickering, but only among the women—jealousy, usually, of what they thought was the over-prominence of some rival in the film. One young mother, whom, with her baby, I was in the midst of filming one clear day, suddenly got up, and despite my threats and pleas, walked away. Neither she nor her husband had been up to snuff of late, so I decided to send them away. "Don't care," said she, when in the most impressive way we announced her fate, "seals are the best food anyway." But old Yew, ever father of his flock, interposed, and what was finally picked out from the crazy-quilt of his pidgin English was that she was not altogether wrong. Two times in as many days I had given Luliakame's (her rival's) baby candy, but I "no see him hers."

With April came longer and warmer days; some days so warm that even on the sledges we fell asleep, while the dogs wandered where and how they willed. By the end of May sledge expeditions far afield—along the coast up into the mouth of Fox Channel in the west, distant some 170 miles; and east 150 miles to Lake Harbour—had been accomplished. June came in with daylight the twenty-four hours long. Hunters came sledging in from the interior, bringing tales of

deer everywhere. Noahasweetow and Annunglung, knowing that I was planning a deer-hunting film, came in one day from a two-sleeps' journey northward, bringing lashed on their sledge a live year-old deer, which, they explained, they had slightly wounded and captured by running down. Their gift proved embarrassing, for what with so many dogs at large, we had to keep it for three disturbing nights in a place of security, which was none other than our kitchen.

On the tenth of June I prepared for our long-planned deer-filming expedition, and on the following day, with camera and retorts of film and food for twenty days, Annunglung and I left for the deer grounds of the interior. Through those long June days we travelled far. The thick yellow sun, hanging low in the northern sky for all the hours save the two at midnight, seemed to roll along the blue masses of the far-off hills. Deer were everywhere, pawing up the mosses deep in the valleys, or in long bands winding funereally across the white surfaces of little lakes and ponds. In three days we had climbed to the summit, a wind-swept boulder plain, of the height of land—the divide of the waters flowing south into Hudson Strait, and north through unknown Lake Amadjuak. Behind us lay the welter of wrinkled hills through which we had come; before us a void of plain.

We were picking out a course when Annunglung pointed to what seemed to be so many boulders in a valley far below. The boulders moved. "Tooktoo!" Annunglung whispered. We mounted camera and tripod on the sledge. Dragging his six-fathom whip ready to cow the dogs before they gave tongue, Annunglung went on before the team.

We swung in behind the shoulder of an intervening hill. When we rounded it we were almost among them. The team lunged. The deer, all but three, galloped to right and left up the slope. Three kept to the valley. On we sped, the camera rocking like the mast of a ship at sea. From the galloping dogs to the deer not two hundred feet beyond, I filmed and filmed and filmed. Yard by yard we began closing in. The dogs, sure of victory, gave tongue. Then something happened. I am not altogether clear as to how it happened. All that I know is that I fell headlong into a deep drift of snow. The sledge was belly-up, and across the traces of the bitterly disappointed team Annunglung was doubled up with laughter.

Within two days we swung back for camp, jubilant over what I was sure was the film of films. But within twelve miles of the journey's end, crossing the rotten ice of a stream, the sledge broke through. Exit film.

On the twenty-third of August we saw the last of good old Yew, Annunglung, Noahasweetow, "Jack Johnson," and their wives and babies and children, and the hills of Baffin Land sank slowly into the sea.

II

OF OUR adventures after leaving Baffin Land, among the Belcher Islands and down the coasts of Hudson and James bays, I have already told. I left the *Laddie* to be berthed for the winter at Moose Factory, and the film, along with the specimens, maps, and notes, went with me by canoe up the Moose and the Mattagami to the "line." The film, during my winter in lower Canada, was edited and put in form. It was too crude to be interesting. But I was to go north again in the spring—this time to explore and winter on the Belcher Islands. I determined to attempt a better one.

Through the winter on the Belchers there was much in the way of exploration to be done, but from late February on, whenever there were good days, I worked at remaking and building up the film I had begun in Baffin Land. In the long evenings around the hut's crackling stove my Eskimos and I talked and speculated as to what scenes could be made. Said Wetalltok one night: "Why not, when the ice breaks in spring, make the aggie [picture] of the big iviuk [walrus]? There are small sea-swept islands some three sleeps north of here where the iviuk live. I know, for I have killed them there. Twenty I killed and flensed during one short day."

"The walrus is bad when he is angry," Wetalltok continued. "That same summer one Eskimo went out from shore with his kayak to hunt ducks. Though early in the

morning there had been a walrus kill, there were no signs of walrus then. He did not come back. All that the people could find were pieces of kayak. The water was red, red, red.

"And you have heard of that kablunak [a member of the Northwest Mounted Police at Cape Fullerton]. Their whaleboat was strong and big, but the walrus they had wounded with their gun but did not kill swam under the boat and up over the side. With his tusks he turned it over. Two of the kablunak swam in to shore, which was near, but the other one was frightened. He swam out. The two kablunak who got out on shore saw the walrus charge the kablunak who was swimming. The walrus kept on charging him, even after he was dead. Then he went for the boat and smashed it to pieces with his tusks. And then he charged the pieces which floated on the sea.

"To come upon the walrus sleeping upon the shore will be the surest way to make the aggie. I will crawl in among them and throw my harpoon. Quick they will all roll into the sea. Then will come the fight. It will take all of us to hold him with the line of my harpoon. You will see his mates close around him. They will all be very, very angry." Such was the beginning of the iviuk aggie.

When June came we were ready and waiting to begin the trip. Salty Bill had long since had the *Nastapoka* rigged and painted and waiting to slide into the sea the moment the ice cleared away.

On the seventeenth the break-up came, and within the day the *Nastapoka* was launched, loaded, and under way. On the last of June we cleared from the last north of the Bel-

cher Islands. At sundown we picked up a bit of land, a boulder-covered waste not much more than a ship's length long. The reader will remember how, attracted by the swarms of sea pigeons that as thick as flies flew up over the island, we ventured too near, and before we knew what had happened, the *Nastapoka*, sagging in a big ground-swell, struck and began pounding to pieces on the rocks. He will remember, too, the three long weeks we spent there, and how, with nothing but a few pieces of driftwood, Salty Bill made a Spanish winch and worked the *Nastapoka* in to shore; and how, with bits of board and canvas, though she had holes in her through which one could crawl, Salty finally fixed her up again. During these dragging days there was little my Eskimos or I could do; so when Mukpollo proposed that in our small open boat and his kayak we continue on northward to the iviuk islands, I decided to make the attempt, forlorn though it seemed to be, since it would be our one last chance to make the film we had planned and waited for so long. Our boat, sixteen feet long, and the kayak, we would catamaran if we came upon rough weather.

What few islands lay along the way were small—the largest less than a mile across. All of them were surf-bound, and the distance between the small pinpoints some of them appeared to be was often more than ten miles. Luck was with us, however, for in the jumps we made from one to another we had always smooth seas. We had put in a long day's travelling and the sun was low down in the west, when Mukpollo, pointing northward to the smallest island speck of all, said: "There is the last of the islands; I hope there are walrus there." We drew near, scanning every inch of shore-

line; but the patch of tawn which we knew would mean a sleeping herd was nowhere to be seen. That they might be on the island's far shore was our one last hope. We looked about for a landing through the surf. Just beyond the shoulder of a little cove, "Iviuk! Iviuk!" called Mukpollo, and sure enough, on the gleaming black surf-worn rocks lay a great herd sprawled out asleep.

Down wind we went, careful as to muffled oars, and landed waist-deep in the surf. Mukpollo went off alone toward the sleeping herd; he returned, saying that they were undisturbed. However, it was much too dark for pictures; we would have to wait until morning. "Yes," said Mukpollo, in answer to my fears, "if the wind holds in the same quarter they will not get our scent." Not daring to build a driftwood fire, we made out our evening meal on raw bacon, sea biscuit, and cold water.

As luck would have it, the wind did hold. With harpoon set and a stout seal line carefully coiled, and my motion picture camera and film retorts in hand, off we crawled for the walrus ground. The herd lay sleeping—twenty great hulks guarded by two big bulls. At about minute intervals they raised their heads over the snoring and swinishly grunting herd and slowly looked around, then sank to sleep again. Slowly I snaked up to the sheltering screen of a big boulder, and Mukpollo, the end of his harpoon line lashed around the boulder, snaked more slowly still out toward them. Once in the open he could move only when the sentinels dropped their heads in sleep. Hours it seemed; but finally he had crawled close in. The sentinels became suspicious and stupidly stared toward him. Slowly they turned their

slobbering heads to and fro; Mukpollo swung his own head in lugubrious unison. They rolled on their sides to scratch themselves; Mukpollo as grotesquely did likewise. Finally the sentinels seemed satisfied; their heads dropped in sleep once more. Now only a dozen feet intervened; quickly Mukpollo closed in. As I signalled he rose upon his feet, and with his harpoon held high, like lightning he struck down at the nearest bull. A bellow and a roar, and twenty great walrus rolled with incredible speed down the wave-washed slope of rocks to sea.

"The line! The line!" cried Mukpollo, "watch the line!" —which was twanging in the air like a fiddle string. But even as he called it snapped in two, and the bull he had stalked so patiently dived and made away. Followed a furious churn of water, and heads with black beady eyes and long, wicked tusks shot up, their battle-cry resounding. The wounded bull threshing the sea in his rage and fury, the herd around him charging—I filmed and filmed, until the last inch was ground away.

In two days we were back again to where Bill and the half-breed were working on the still much-bruised and battered *Nastapoka*.

But, confident now of our ability to hop, skip, and jump between the islands, I decided to go on with Mukpollo to the base. Came a two days' gale, but the morning of the third day broke clear, and though the swells still ran long and high there was little wind. Off we struck for the next island, some fifteen miles south. The speck of it we could barely make out, for the swells ran higher than our boat was long.

The day was done before the boom of the surf rang in our

HUNTING NANOOK THE BEAR

ears. Overnight came heavy wind, and for two days we waited for the sea to calm down. When again we launched out, what wind there was followed us. So we sailed, covering in an hour what would have taken thrice that time by paddle. By night we had reached the last island of the chain. But one more gap, some twelve miles, lay between us and home. Bowling on with the bone in our teeth, we closed in to the sea-swept shore, looking for a landing. What beach there was gave way to a short line of cliffs. Beyond them we hoped to find a cove.

Of a sudden the blanket we had for sail began threshing in a squall of wind. Before we could haul in sail we were caught in the undertow. With the film retorts of the iviuk aggie Mukpollo sprang clear. Omarolluk grabbed his harpoon and my gun, and I followed with the cameras. The kayak came out of it unhurt, but the open boat was no more. Only her ribs remained.

Followed two days of wind and driving rain. What food we had was sea biscuit and water, and shelter, the lee of boulders. "The best thing now," said Mukpollo, "is for Tookalook to crawl inside my kayak and I will paddle down to your big igloo and return with the kayak and your old canoe."

Came wind and rain. For two days I stayed within the boulder shelter. The wind became almost a gale and the seas drove high. As the murk of night crept through the storm, thought I, "There's going to be another day of it." And then above the din of wind and rain and sea came what sounded like a faint "Chimo-o-o." Mechanically I looked out. With unbelieving eyes, I made out two men in my old

canoe—Tookalook, steering in the stern; and Mukpollo, bailing with a pail. They had a piece of blanket for sail with which to carry on. Mukpollo's kayak, catamaraned, was all that kept them from swamping as they sprang up from nowhere to the crests of sprawling seas.

The day following we were home once more. Another day and I had developed the "iviuk aggie"; and that evening with Tookalook and Mukpollo looking on, I unrolled it before the lamplight. Every scene was there.

The reader will remember our difficulties with the *Laddie* —how she had to be abandoned during the winter and used up, piece by piece, for fuel. The only craft remaining in which we could make the five hundred miles down through the open bay to the mouth of the Moose River was the little thirty-six-foot *Nastapoka*. Bruised and battered as she was, Bill, as soon as he got her down to the base, pulled her up and overhauled her, declaring that, gales or no, she would do for the big trip down. Of course, everything had to be left behind save the clothes we wore, some three weeks' food, notes, maps, specimens, and the film—two boxes covered by the Eskimos with waterproofing of sealskin carefully sewn.

On the thirteenth of September we climbed aboard. The following morning we were fifty miles on and the last outlier of the Belchers disappeared. Then for three days September gales blew head on, and with all James Bay for sea room the *Nastapoka*, with mainsail reefed and rudder lashed, hove to. When the gale blew out, from island to island we kept on, standing behind them when the winds were against us; then on again with each good slant. It was two weeks before we reached the south end of the Bay.

On the first of October we left the little *Nastapoka* snugged up in the placid cove at "Moose." In two weeks more we saw the last of rapids, long bends, and portages. We "struck the line." The film was safe and sound. And then came the end—while putting it in form, from nothing more formidable than my cigarette, the last inch of it went up in smoke!

To make a long story short, I could not forget the film; I decided to go north again, this time wholly for the purpose of picturing the people I had come to like so well. Mr. John Revillon and Captain Thierry Mallet, of Revillon Frères, undertook to finance the project. Their fur post at Cape Dufferin, on northeastern Hudson Bay, was to be the nucleus for my work.

On the fifteenth of August we let go anchor in the mouth of the Innusuk River, and the five gaunt and melancholy-looking buildings which make up the post stood out on a boulder-ridden slope less than half a mile a way.

Of the Eskimos who were known to the post, a dozen all told were selected for the film. Of these Nanook, a character famous in the country, I chose as my chief man. Besides him, and much to his approval, I took on three younger men as helpers. This also meant their wives and families, dogs to the number of twenty-five, sledges, kayaks, and hunting impedimenta.

As luck would have it, the first film to be made was that of a walrus hunt. From Nanook I heard of the "Walrus Island." On its south end, a surf-bound beach, there were in summer, he said, many walrus, judging from signs that had been seen by a winter sealing crowd of Eskimos who at one

time had been caught there by a break-up of the ice. "The people do not go out to the island in summer," he continued, "for not only is it out of sight of land, but it is ringed with heavy surf—dangerous landing for kayaks. But for a long time I have had my eyes on your whaleboat," said he, "and I am sure, if the seas are smooth, it is big enough for crossing over, and just the thing for landing."

Through the busy weeks that followed, time and time again Nanook reminded me of the many, many moons it was since he had hunted walrus. One morning I woke up to see the profile of rising ground just beyond my window covered with topeks. Nanook popped his head in through the door. They were Eskimos from the north, he said, far away. "And among them," eagerly he continued, "is the very man who saw the walrus signs on Walrus Island."

Nanook was off, to return in a moment more leading the great man through the door. We talked iviuk through the hour. "Suppose we go," said I in conclusion. "do you know that you and your men may have to give up making a kill, if it interferes with my film? Will you remember that it is the picture of you hunting the iviuk that I want, and not their meat?"

"Yes, yes, the aggie will come first," earnestly he assured me. "Not a man will stir, not a harpoon will be thrown until you give the sign. It is my word." We shook hands and agreed to start next day.

For three days we lay along the coast, before the big seas outside died down. The wind began blowing off the land. We broke out our leg-o'-mutton. Before the day was half done a film of gray far out in the west told us we were in

sight of Walrus Island. By nightfall we closed in to the thundering shadow that was its shore.

For hours we lounged around the luxury of a driftwood fire, soaking in its warmth and speculating on our chances for the morrow. When daylight came we made off to where the stranger had told us he had found the walrus signs. It was a crescent of beach pounded by the surf. While we looked around, one after another the heads of a school of walrus, their wicked tusks gleaming in the sun, shot up above the sea.

By night all my stock of film was exposed. The whaleboat was full of walrus meat and ivory. Nanook never had such walrus-hunting and never had I such filming, as that on Walrus Island.

Three days later the post bell clangs out the welcome news that the kablunak is about to show his iviuk aggie. Men, old men, women, old women, boys, girls, and small children file in to the factor's house. Soon there is not an inch of space to spare. The trader turns down the lamps. The projector light shoots over the shocks of heads upon the blanket which is the screen.

Then the picture. A figure appears. There is silence. They do not understand. "See, it is Nanook!" the trader cries. The Nanook in the flesh laughs his embarrassment. "Ah! ah! ah!" they all exclaim. Then silence. The figure moves. The silence deepens. They cannot understand. They turn their heads. They stare at the projector. They stare at its beam of magic light. They stare at Nanook, the most surprised of all, and again their heads turn toward the screen. They follow the figure which now snakes to-

ward the background. There is something in the background. The something moves. It lifts its head.

"Iviuk! iviuk!" shakes the room. The figure stands up, harpoon poised in hand.

"Be sure of your harpoon! be sure of your harpoon!" the audience cries.

The figure strikes down; the walrus roll off into the sea. More figures rush in; they grab the harpoon line. For dear life they hold on.

"Hold him! hold him!" shout the men. "Hold him! hold him!" squeal the women. "Hold him!" pipe the children.

The walrus's mate dives in, and by locking tusks attempts rescue.

"Hold him!" gasps the crowd.

Nanook and his crew, although their arms seem to be breaking, hold on. But slowly and surely the threshing walrus drags the figures nearer sea.

"Hold him! hold him!" they despair. They are breathing hard. "Dig in! dig in!" they rasp, as Nanook's feet slip another inch through the sand.

Deep silence. Suddenly the line sags, the crew, like a flash, draw in the slack, and inch by inch the walrus is pulled in to shore. Bedlam rocks the house.

The fame of the film spread far up and far down the coast. Every strange Eskimo that came into the post Nanook brought before me and begged that he be shown the iviuk aggie.

III

THIRTY or more years ago the interior of northern Ungava teemed with bands of barren-ground caribou. They numbered thousands. Now, however, there are only a few straggling bands. A caribou kill of even half-a-dozen after a long summer's trip into the interior is an event among the Eskimos. Skins for clothing consequently are rare. The Cape Dufferin people are the poorest clad I have ever seen. The clothing of Nanook and his crew was no exception, so I cast around for means of getting skins with which to make new and better costumes. No skins were to be had. Those few fortunates who had new deerskin clothing refused to let it go for anything I might have in exchange. I did secure for my own wear a much-worn kooletah (hooded coat) and an old pair of deerskin trousers, but the present in exchange was a brand-new Winchester and two hundred cartridges.

Along about freeze-up time, one Nevalingha came into the post to trade. Nanook let me know that he and his hunting companion had made a deer kill in the far interior during the summer—so far, however, from the coast, that they had had to cache the skins and horns, expecting to bring them down by sledge in winter. I approached Nevalingha in the hope of securing the skins, but he explained that all of them were promised, some to his father, some to his friends, some to his brother, and so on. He couldn't break his promises, and at

any rate they all needed them badly. As well did I need them, and I made extravagant bids, but all that I had, said he, could not compensate for the lack of warm winter clothing. However, those to whom he was to have given skins were prevailed upon to release him from his promises. I was to give him food and ammunition and walrus meat for his dogs, and upon his return with the skins was to pay him as much as if they were all white foxes. Nevalingha, the ne'er-do-well, became prospectively a rich man. He had never stood high in the factor's favour—"hell for eatin' and not much for foxes," the latter said. He and his companions were gone three weeks into a country in which the Eskimos had never hunted foxes before. They returned with not only the twenty-two deerskins, but to the amazement of the factor, with the prime pelts of forty-three foxes—to an Eskimo a fabulous fortune.

When in December the snow lay heavy on the ground Nanook and his men abandoned their topeks of sealskin and a village of snow igloos sprung up around my wintering post. They snow-walled my little hut to the eaves with thick blocks of snow. My kitchen was their rendezvous—there was always a five-gallon pail of tea steeping on the stove and sea biscuit in the barrel. My little gramophone, too, was common property. Caruso, Farrar, Riccardo, Martin, McCormack, served their turns with Harry Lauder, Al Jolson, and Jazz King orchestras. Caruso in the Pagliacci prologue with its tragic ending was to them the most comic record of the lot. Nanook shook with laughter; the children rolled with merriment on the floor.

Nanook was always busy at some work or other, con-

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THE BARREN LANDS

stantly on the lookout to barter for game if some hunting team came in, to inquire into every strange hunting experience which might at some time in future serve for the kablunak's aggie; to see that the stoves kept drawing; to keep the drift from clogging up my cabin windows. On days when there was film developing he, "Harry Lauder," their wives and children shuttled from the cabin to the waterhole, with dogs and sledge hauling water for the kablunak's thirsty coils of film—two ice-clogged barrels at a time.

One of Nanook's problems was to construct an igloo large enough for the filming of interior scenes. The average Eskimo igloo, about twelve feet in diameter, was much too small. On the dimensions I laid out for him, a diameter of twenty-five feet, Nanook and his companions started in to build the biggest igloo of their lives. For two days they worked, the women and children helping them. Then came the hard part—to cut insets for five large slab-ice windows without weakening the dome. They had hardly begun when the dome fell in pieces to the ground. "Never mind," said Nanook, "I can do it next time."

For two days more they worked, but again with the same result; as soon as they began setting in the ice windows their structure fell to the ground. It was a huge joke this time, and holding their sides they laughed their misfortune away. Again Nanook began on the "big aggie igloo," but this time the women and children hauled barrels of water on sledges from the waterhole and iced the walls as fast as they went up. Finally the igloo was finished and they stood eyeing it as satisfied as so many children over a house of blocks. The light from the ice windows proved inadequate, however, and

when the interiors were finally filmed the dome's half just over the camera had to be cut away, so Nanook and his family went to sleep and awakened with all the cold of out-of-doors pouring in.

To "Harry Lauder" I deputed the care of my cameras. Bringing them from the cold outside into contact with the warm air of the base often frosted them inside and out, which necessitated taking them apart and carefully drying them piece by piece. With the motion picture cameras there was no difficulty, but with my Graflex I found to my sorrow such a complication of parts that I could not get it together again. For several days its "innards" lay strewn on my work table. "Harry Lauder" finally volunteered for the task of putting them together, and through a long evening before a flickering candle and with a crowd of Eskimos around ejaculating their "ayee's" and "ah's," he managed to succeed where I had failed.

Never shall I forget his proffered ministrations to an ulcerated tooth. After witnessing the inadequacy of all the resources of my medicine kit and the disastrous failure of an attempt to pull, he came to me, with a tiny drill which he had laboriously fashioned out of a tenpenny nail and mounted in a carpenter's brace.

Between Nanook and "Harry Lauder" and myself there never was a serious misunderstanding. But that they should arise between myself and some of the Eskimos with whom I was less intimate was, I suppose, inevitable. They were due for the most part to my own inability, perhaps, to comprehend exactly what they meant to say and under ordinary circumstances were soon explained away. Only once under

peculiar stress did misunderstanding assume serious proportions. This was with one Aviuk, on our return from an expedition up the coast. For three days we had been without oil—three days of subsisting on cold food and no tea—when we came to a cache and a gallon of the precious fuel. The following day, travelling with difficulty in the face of a bitterly cold drifter, we had halted to disentangle the snarled traces of the team, and Aviuk called to me saying that the oil was gone—had been left behind. Only then did I realize all that that oil meant. I could not contain myself. "Harry Lauder" and his companion, scenting trouble, discreetly withdrew, one ahead and one behind, and were lost in a blur of drift. Aviuk had drawn his snow knife from his belt and now, brandishing it in front of me, was pouring out a lava flow in Eskimo. The harpoons lay lashed in front of me on the sledge, and I was debating my chances of seizing one in time when it dawned upon me that Aviuk's rather startling pantomime was not intended offensively. Out of the drift at this juncture came "Harry Lauder" holding aloft the lost article—an old tin can I had thrown away! The incident was closed that night over a love feast of dried apples with plenty of sugar, well cooked and warm. All through January the Eskimos complained of the hard winter—no seals. The sea, said they, was frozen for miles and miles, farther out than in any other year they could remember. There had been a lapse of days in the constant winter winds and the movement and the milling of the icefields were stilled, and like magic seal-hunting lanes and tidal pools were frozen fast. Until heavy gales again should blow, the doors of their hunting grounds were closed. Some spoke of the long

and fruitless vigils, day by day and through the nights, over the breathing holes of seal; some, without seal oil for their lamps, of the darkness of the igloos. They spoke even of the madness that comes from starvation, and in distress of mind sought advice as to what they should do with a madman who terrorized and paralyzed the whole village, threatening the safety of women and children and keeping the men from their hunting. There were tales of bear, themselves hungry for the seal upon which they live, prowling about the encampments at night. One old couple asleep in their igloo had been wakened by the snow of the igloo dome falling on their faces, to see by the feeble lamplight the mask of a bear sniffing and growling as he moved his head to and fro—sniffing the good seal-oil smell of lamp and clothing. Desperately enough the old woman had seized her trimming stick, lighted it, and holding it to the bear's nose had kept the beast at bay while her husband crawled outside for his harpoon!

The walrus hunting having proved successful, Nanook aspired to bigger game—a bear hunt, no less, at Cape Sir Thomas Smith, some two hundred miles northward. "Here," said Nanook, "is where the she-bear den in the winter, and it seems to me that we might get the big, big aggie there."

He went on to describe how in early December the she-bear dens in huge drift banks of snow. There is nothing to mark the den save a tiny vent, or airhole, which is melted open by the animal's body heat. His companions would remain at either side of me, rifles in hand, whilst he with his snow knife would open up the den, block by block. The dogs in the meantime would all be unleashed and like wolves circle the opening. Mrs. Bear's door opened, Nanook, with

nothing but his harpoon, would be poised and waiting. The dogs baiting the quarry—some of them with her lightning paws the bear would send hurtling through the air; himself dancing here and there—he pantomimed the scene on my cabin floor, using my fiddle bow for harpoon—waiting to dart in for a close-up throw; this, he felt sure, would be a big, big picture (aggie peerualluk). I agreed with him.

"With good going ten days will see us there. Ten days for hunting on the Cape, then ten days for coming home again. But throw in another ten days for bad weather, and let's see [counting on his fingers]—that makes four times my fingers—more than enough to see us through."

"All right," said I, "we'll go." And Nanook, his eyes shining, went off to spread the news.

For two weeks we prepared. First of all Nanook and "Harry Lauder" sledged out over the sea ice for walrus meat we had cached under boulders on the walrus island. Every night we cooked our big iron pot full of pork and beans and poured them into a large sack, which hung from a hook out of doors, to freeze them. Nanook relashed with tough sealskin thongs and smoothed the runners of his staunchest sledge, whilst his and the wives of his crew on my cabin floor sewed and sewed boots, kooletahs, and dogskin mitts, and fashioned a new sealskin dog whip six fathoms long. Most important of all were the bows and arrows and bear spears, all to be headed, not with the kablunak's iron, but with stones, as in days of long ago.

The day before the start four sledges of Eskimos came in from the north, all of them complaining of the hard winter—no seal. They told us, moreover, that from Cape Smith on

down to Cape Dufferin no Eskimos remained. All had sledged south, for everywhere was the hunting condition the same. With no Eskimos along the coast to depend upon for dog food, to get dog food, said Nanook, when the supply on the sledge was gone, we must ourselves kill. This might mean spending weeks in hunting. So we cast around for an extra team and two men to come as a relay part way: but though there were willing men, no one had the dogs to spare.

IV

THE seventeenth of January was cold enough. I scratched a peephole through the frost enamel of my window. Sundogs, two faint balls of brass, flanked the weak, low-hanging sun. Snow smoke swept the ground, the igloo domes near by, and the jowl of a distant granite hill. Before I had finished my last scalding mug of tea there was a knock on the cabin door, and Nanook, brushing the snow from his furs, walked in. He smiled "good morning," as he took up my duffle-bag and eiderdown and handed them out to be lashed aboard the sledge.

"This is good wind," observed Nanook, as we halted some three hours on to untangle the traces of the team. "See how it packs the snow." Before the day was half done the snow was like a pavement. The big sledge swayed and rocked with speed. By nightfall the wild fan of dogs were scrambling like a pack of wolves up the slope of the last igloo village on the coast, miles beyond the point we had hoped to make.

By daybreak we were off again, helter-skelter down a steep slope, a-crash through the tidal ice, then off straight north through twisting snow-smoke on an unending sweep of frozen sea. All day long we jogged, our faces masked by ice, the frozen sweat of heavy running. On some of the small whalebacks of islands which were strung out along the way

we saw the empty shells of igloos of hungry Eskimos who long since had sledged south in search of seal. And before the day was done we picked out the black dots of many Eskimos and teams. They were the last of the Eskimos from the north—six sledges bound south for seal. They thronged around the sledge, hungry for hunting news and any crumbs of food we might have to spare.

By nightfall we were beyond the last high hill. Ahead the coast led off, a thin black line, not much higher than the monotone of white through which it wound. "We are well on the way," said Nanook, spacing the post, our position, and Cape Smith with his snow knife on the snow. "Five days and we will be there." By dark the team, long since fed, were asleep, snugged up in the snow and blanketed by the drift which ran low along the ground.

Nanook never built a better igloo. The edges of its dominoes of snow were sapphires gleaming in the seal lamp's yellow light. Of royal height and width was the sleeping bunk Nanook carved for me out of blocks of snow. Over the oil lamp I cooked up a brewis of sea biscuit and codfish and stewed dried apples for the crew. We went to sleep on Nanook's stories of seal and fox and bear hunting on the Cape.

By candlelight we gulped breakfast, and at the first crack of dawn crawled out—but what a sight! The down of new-fallen snow lay heavy on the ground. Not a breath of wind moved over it. The team moved like a snail. Nanook's long whip cracked through the air.

"Aput peeungatwaluk" [bad snow, bad snow], complained the men. We kept far out on the smooth ice at sea, so

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NANOOK THE HARPOONER

Nanook never knew just where we were, until on the eighth day at sundown we sighted on the hump of a small island an abandoned village of snow houses, the black holes of their doorways gaping and broken down. "To this place we have taken ten days," Nanook glumly said. "With good going it is only three days from home. Only three days from home, and our dog food almost gone."

Morning came with a stiff wind swinging in from sea. With every hour the going grew harder and the team once more worked with a semblance of their old-time speed. When evening came on, with Nanook I climbed to the crest of an island, hoping he would sight some familiar landmark. But the coast was all the same—a thin black line. Mechanically our eyes followed it as it wound off into the north, until suddenly we caught sight of what first seemed a wisp of blue-gray cloud, indefinable, far away. I could not believe it when Nanook said it was the Cape. "But far off," he added, "all of five days away." The evening through the crew hunched up over mending and I from the depths of my eider-down listened again to Nanook's adventures on the Cape.

"Three winters ago on the Cape," said Nanook, "there were many, many bear. One night the snarling and yelping of the dogs in the igloo tunnel woke me. In the igloo, head and shoulders through the door, was a bear. He had come in through the snow tunnel. Behind him the dogs were biting and snapping at his legs and haunches; he could not back out and he could not come through. My harpoon and spears were outside. I must cut a hole through the igloo walls; but the walls—it was an old igloo—were almost ice. The bear

was growling, showing his teeth—his lips were all foam. If the dogs would let him he would smash down the door. I cut through the igloo wall and got my spear. My family were frightened."

Said "Harry Lauder": "Annunglung and his mother [Annunglung's father was dead] killed a bear last winter on the Kogaluk. Annunglung is only a boy. He and his mother were going from the igloo to the river's mouth to fish. They met a bear. They wanted that bear, for they were hungry. But all they had was a bow and arrow. The dogs brought the bear to a stand. Annunglung shot all his arrows, but he did not kill the bear. They had nothing left. They wanted the bear, for they were very, very hungry. One arrow was sticking in the bear; the others were near him on the ground. Annunglung, to fool the bear, jumped toward his head, and his mother ran in. With one hand she grabbed an arrow on the ground. With the other hand she grabbed the arrow sticking in the bear. They killed the bear."

"Yes," said Nanook, "on the island straight out from Cape Wolstenholme the kablunak's big ship that hunts whales struck a reef [the *Captain Grant* disaster, during the fall of 1911]. When the ship struck the reef the kablunak told the Eskimos who were aboard to go ashore. Then the storm came. The ship and the thirty kablunak went down. The Eskimos became very hungry. They had lost their weapons and dogs and kayaks and tents, which sank with the ship. But they had the white man's knife, and casks drifted in from the wreck. Out of the wood of the casks, not much longer than my arm [measuring] they made bows and

arrows. And it was with these bows and arrows that they killed bear and ate meat and made clothing."

Bear prospects on the Cape interested us most. All over again we talked of the "big, big aggie." Nanook picked up a hunk of snow. With a few simple strokes he carved a miniature bear. With it before him he made tracings in the snow. "The bear will stick to the cave," said he, "until we open it block by block, for her cubs are very small. [The cub at birth is no larger than a rat.] But be careful of the cave," said Nanook. "The roof is thin, not strong," and he wound up with an unintelligible exclamation. Explained "Harry Lauder," the post-trained: "You fall in, bear him saucy."

We were breaking camp before the sun had cleared the horizon. The dogs fought like wolves as they wedged in through the door of the igloo we had just vacated; the crew tried vainly by grasping legs and tails to drag them out for harnessing; Nanook, his arms around the master dog, carried him bodily to the sledge. I unlimbered the Akeley, hoping to get a few feet of it all on film. But, to my dismay, as soon as I started grinding, so brittle was the film that it broke into bits, like so much wafer glass. The thermometer read thirty-seven degrees below. We were up against it, since thirty-seven below and more would be common in the weeks to come. Clearly, unless some remedy were found, it would be useless to keep on.

We went back into camp. By keeping the film retorts in the igloo I found that within the hour they took on its temperature. The film regained its ductility. I told off Nanook to bury the film retorts and camera in his deerskin robe

henceforth when we broke camp in the morning. The crew were convulsed over what they called "the babies" for which he had to care.

Through the next three days we strained our eyes for another sight of the Cape, but drift filled the air. Even the coastline, never more than six to ten miles off in the east, we glimpsed only occasionally, and then so faintly that Nanook could only guess at where we were.

The first of February broke with a drifter. All day we toiled slowly on through big, rough ice. But by sundown we made a landfall, and the toil and care of heavy sledging were forgotten. Nanook pointed to a patch, faint, far-off, through the birl of snow. He was sure it was the Cape. There was a shift in the wind and momentarily the drift thinned out; but the patch was nothing but a small island no more than a mile away. "The Cape gets farther away," complained the crew.

A luckless, glum camp was our igloo that night. Nanook's strong dog had been crippled in the rough ice. To-morrow the dog food would be at an end. What food remained for Nanook and his crew was a share of mine—poor substitute for seal. There were no stories about the Cape, and as to where we were Nanook refused to answer.

All through the next day Nanook and the crew walked far out on the sea ice, hunting seal. When evening came I watched the black specks of them return. "No seals," said Nanook, as he crawled through the snow tunnel into camp; "and," he went on to relate, shaking the snow dust from his furs, "I waited over one hole all day." I told him it was not the kind of hunting I should care to do. Said he, "I have

waited three days for a seal. And," he concluded simply, "the seal never came. But wait till we get to the Cape," hopefully he went on. "Nowhere can one find a better place for seal. There never was such hunting ground."

For two days snow smoke filled the air. Then the wind broke. By igloo time the gray pall which so long had overspread the sky gave way to a glowing ground of blue. We climbed a near-by mound of ice. From the big disk of sun, half-sunken in the sea, we watched a flood of amber creep over the wilderness of ice and snow, over spires and pinnacles, the emeralds of miles and miles of rough icefields. Banks of mists hung like curtains in the north. "Behind them," said Nanook, "lies the Cape." But of the Cape there was no sign. The sun's upper rim was almost level with the sea. We were turning toward camp, when slowly the searchlight from the sun lifted up. The mists caught fire. Through their red and salmon embers broke the gigantic head and shoulders of the Cape.

Night gloom was down in a moment more; the Cape was wrapped in cloud. Nothing remained but a splash of copper where the sun had fallen into the sea.

Again came three drift-swept days. We saw no land save near-by islands and occasionally a black thread of coast. More slowly we travelled, for the dogs were weak. There were fruitless hunts for seal. The evenings were all the same—mending and keeping gear in repair, and Nanook's tales. One night he told us how he and his mother (he was a boy then) were travelling through the interior with a band of Eskimos. Two of them died of starvation; he himself was badly frozen. He said dogs were good eating; he with the

others ate them then. "Harry Lauder" told me too that dogs were good eating; he told us that one winter they had nothing to eat for a long time but dogs. For a month they had no light for their igloos.

The fourth day was clear. Again there were sundogs, and the coast hung miraged in the stark sky. But notwithstanding, Nanook told us he had found a landmark. It was Mosquito Bay, and the Cape was near—not more than two days away. But even by noon we found no bay to cross. Our faces fell; Nanook bowed his head and steadfastly refused to look upon the confounding mirage again.

Whenever we crossed cracks or fissures in the ice Nanook scanned them for signs of seal. Some he followed far afield, only to spend an hour's hard running to catch up with us again. We looked anxiously for the Cape, but everywhere in the north were nothing but ponderous banks of clouds. As evening drew near, Nanook said that we were near the mouth of Mosquito Bay, and pointed to a speck of hill which broke the thin low line of coast. We turned in, cheerful over the prospect of crossing it on the morrow. The crew were filled with jokes and chatter about bear and seal and foxes that were waiting for them on the Cape.

We were off at daybreak next day. But the long hours dragged one by one, and still no sign of the landmark we had been looking for so long. Nanook, ashamed to join us at the sledge, was a black dot on the ice ahead. Every little way we stopped to rest the dogs; the poor brutes were starving; Tooktoo, our big brown leader, was too weak to carry on. We lashed him on the sledge. To keep them from freezing, one of us now and then rubbed his feet.

The twenty-second day. Again we carried the brown dog on the sledge. His groans troubled the team, who would halt and turn their heads toward him. We took turns at putting our shoulders to the sledge, for the team could barely keep it moving. When we halted to rest them and untangle traces Nanook, pointing to Tooktoo, said he was dying. He killed him with a bear spear. I suggested we might take the carcass to use as dog food; but Nanook, holding it aloft, said it was a skeleton. So we left poor old Tooktoo, a brown patch lying on the snow.

Again we took turns at putting our shoulders to the sledge. We saw nothing of the coast, so thick was the drive of snow. Slowly the day dragged on. Nanook talked to, urged, and cajoled the broken team. Glumly enough we were debating whether it would not be wise to stop, igloo for the night, and rest up the team; when Nanook pointed with his harpoon to a break in the sky ahead. High up from where the line of coast should be loomed a patch of gray and black, guttered by ravines of snow.

"The Cape!" he called. Then the sun flooded everything, and everywhere the shroud before us fell away; and a gigantic flank, wrinkled, seamed and scarred, rose for a thousand feet until it touched the sky.

Every dog knew we were near the journey's end. Not for days had our lump of sledge moved so fast. The night was down, but within the hour we were on the ice foot of the Cape cutting an igloo in the snow. I fell asleep to the drone of Nanook's voice, running over plans for the great seal hunt in the morning.

When I wakened, though daylight was still an hour away,

Nanook, by fitful candlelight, was going over his spears and harpoons. He smacked his lips when he talked of seal. Where we were camped the rough sea ice, jammed high against the shoreline of the Cape, prevented our seeing the sea. So, with our hearts in our mouths, we climbed a rise for a sight of Nanook's great hunting ground. For some time we strained our eyes out over that white waste before we realized that nowhere was there an open lane or dot of tidal pool, but everywhere it was unbroken—solid ice, jammed in by the wind and as barren as the desert over which we had come.

From my diary:

Wednesday, February 8th.—Gale all through the night. Its roar resounds despite thick igloo walls. Nanook went out at daybreak; returned in half an hour. "Too much wind," said he. Saw tracks of four bear which must have crossed ice foot within sight of igloo some time during night. Our dogs either failed to smell them or were too weak to sound alarm. Indoors all day. Constantly comes the boom and thunder of the icefields as they jam and raft high along the coast.

Thursday.—Gale subsides. Myself not very fit. In igloo all day. When among the icefields sealing Nanook kills one, but very small. So hungry they couldn't wait to carry it to igloo for flensing, but gorged on it where it lay. When Nanook came crawling through the igloo dragging what remained of the carcass he had a battle royal with the dogs.

Through the evening Nanook talked of ice; of how he and his two hunting companions were nearly caught on the ice

THE SIGNATURE OF THE ARTIST, AND THE ARTIST HIMSELF—WETALLTOK

pack which drove out to sea. "Where it happened is not a half-day's sledging from this igloo. We were out on the rough ice after bear. We had made a kill and were on our way in to land, when we came upon a lane of open water which stood between us and the ice foot of the Cape. Far off in the distance the lane narrowed. We dropped our kill and made off as fast as we could travel, but nowhere was the lane narrow enough to leap. Just in time we spied an ice pan. It was about the length of a sledge. With the ice pan for boat, our harpoons for paddles, we paddled across."

Then each of the crew told of some misadventure he had had at some time or other on the ice. "Harry Lauder," with his father and mother, the mother carrying a babe in arms, were adrift all through one moon off the Gulf Hazard coast. When the west winds packed the icefield in to the mainland where they landed was Cape Dufferin, two hundred and fifty miles north of Gulf Hazard. The winter was almost done before they saw home again.

"I remember Comock of Kovik, just north of here," said Nanook. "Comock and three men, wives, and children were out on the ice. The ice broke while they slept. Two of the men, a woman, and three children drifted off one way and Comock and the rest off the other. The others were never seen or heard of again. But Comock and his crowd, after days and days adrift, touched land. It was the big island far off from Kovik [Mansfield Island, seventy miles off the coast]. On this island did Comock and his people live. They were very poor. They clothed themselves with skins of the bear. Their sinew [thread] they cut from the intestines of the salmon. They got very hungry for their

old friends and homeland, so one day they put out upon the ice as it was parting from the shoreline, hoping that the west winds would blow long enough to carry them over to the mainland. But for a moon they drifted here and there and everywhere, and when they landed it was on an island off Cape Wolstenholme.

"They were very poor," Nanook repeated. "They lived on sea pigeons which they killed with stones. With what sealskins they had and what driftwood, walrus bones, and a deer horn they found along the shore, they made an omiak. But the omiak was not large enough to hold them all, who now numbered thirteen men, women, babes, and children. So they blew up seal bladders and tied them on the sides of their omiak. Comock's head wife held a long stick in her hands so that she might keep the children still. Where they reached the mainland was on the straight up-and-down coast of Cape Wolstenholme. On the first narrow ledge that they could see they landed, for a strong wind was rising. The landing was barely big enough to hold their omiaks and themselves, but here for two days they had to stay. The seas drenched them. When the water was calm again they launched their omiak, paddled around the big nose of the Cape, and landed in the snug cove on the other side. Old friends greeted them when they walked out on shore. They must have been glad," said Nanook in conclusion.

"How long was it," I asked, "from the time they were swept out to sea before they reached their homeland again?"

"Ten summers and ten winters were the number of the notches that Comock cut on the handle of his harpoon," Nanook replied.

Friday.—Living gale from southward. Coal-oil almost gone. Nanook improvised a seal-oil lamp out of a piece of driftwood, fireproofing the wick side with a strip of tin. Depend upon it for warmth but it gives a woful amount. Nothing to do but keep in sleeping-bag and huddle from the cold and listen to the bitter wind as it pipes above the hiss of driving snow about the igloo dome. Shadows show, through the snow walls, of great clouds of drift as they go birling by.

Saturday.—Sleepless, I listened all night for a let-up to the wail of wind. Dawn was still, but crawling out-of-doors everything was blanketed with rime and heavy snow. Within the hour the wind whipped around to the north and was blowing another gale. Again no sealing. Our igloo was much begrimed. The heap of picked bones in the lamp corner was a sight. Nanook with his snow knife scraped away the litter; as he brushed it out through the door the dogs turned the place into pandemonium with their fighting. We had to club hard to prevent them forcing an entrance. Later during the day the dogs ate up some of our precious seal line and a sealskin bow-and-arrow case which we had cached—out of harm's way, we supposed—on top the igloo dome.

Overnight the gale subsided. We broke camp and put out along the Cape's north flank. Within the mile we sighted a white fox jumping wildly to get free of a trap Nanook had set the day before. The fox was no sooner killed and the sledge started again than Nanook, squatted on the sledgeload, skinned the fox and shared with the men rare tidbits of the still-warm flesh. Blood drops fell on the trail, and on his bootlegs were great red splotches. When I

remarked that they must be very hungry, said Nanook, "We have had no food." I remonstrated. Said he, only enough remained for me, and he added, "From now on there will be no sharing." Iglooed on the ice foot. Igloo very cold. My cold feet prevented sleep, but Nanook, crawling over, took off his kooletah, placed them on his stomach, put them under the pits of his arms and rubbed them until they were warm through and through.

Monday.—At dark men returned. They saw the tracks of eight bear through various hours of the day, all of them going far out to sea on their hunt for seal. Nanook returned late. How we waited to hear above the din of dog howling some word of bear caves! But there were many gulps of food and sips of tea before he gave us any news. Saw many, many signs, but no caves. The bear are far out on the ice edge at sea, he thinks. He fears snow is too heavily drifted by recent gales and dens may be impossible to find. "Harry Lauder," for the last two days sulking, now tries to regain my good-will—on the alert to cut my tobacco, overhaul my boots and dogskin mitts, and keep my sleeping bag, which is as stiff as so much tin, limber and clear of rime and snow.

Tuesday.—Cheerless day. Very cold west wind. Met many bear tracks as we travelled. Nowhere a sign of open water. We came upon a flock of ducks wheeling over the rough ice. The sight filled me with elation, for I felt sure that open water must be near. But Nanook was grim and silent. The ducks were starving—nearly frozen; they showed it in the feebleness of their flights. Every drift bank in the chaos of seamed and ribbed lava which makes up the Cape's tremendous flank we scanned for signs of bear. By

nightfall we reached the point where the Cape buries its nose in a snarl of frozen sea. Nowhere was there a sight of open water.

Wednesday.—The men went off early sealing in the rough ice, and Nanook with one of the dogs in leash went up bear-cave hunting among the ranges. I dare not go far from the igloo, for no matter how securely I block the igloo door the dogs start digging at the igloo walls the moment my back is turned. The men returned at dark. No seals, but far out they saw a narrow lane of open water.

Thursday.—The dogs all in. Whenever I crawl out through the tunnel I have to lift them like sacks of flour out of my way. During the morning I saw a blue lane of open water out in the west. Time and time again I climbed to a lookout for a sight of the men, fearful that they might dare too much or be swept out to sea.

Friday, *Saturday*, *Sunday*.—Same—no seals.

Monday.—Same, no seals. No light, no oil for lamp. Igloo very cold. Morning and night three candles under an old lard pail thawed out my hunks of frozen beans.

Tuesday.—Nanook broke open the snow-block door his face all smiles. No wonder: he shoved forward a small seal. But his smile was more than a small seal smile. An ogjuk —big—longer than the spread of his arms—lay out in a safe cache on the ice. Everywhere the sea ice was opening, he said. Signs of bear were everywhere—yes, and not a harpoon's throw from the igloo they picked out the trail of a big one that not long before had passed by. (Probably I was asleep.) What a night! The dogs' bellies full, Nanook and the crew almost drunk with feasting—chunks and chunks

and chunks of meat. Grunted like walruses when they turned in.

Wednesday.—Never have any of our igloos been so warm. From the hoar-frosted prostrate forms of the men rise streams of vapour. So much for the body heat that comes from raw seal-meat eating.

V

WITHIN a week the dogs were on their feet again, and we struck off with a groaning sledgeload of red seal meat back along our old trail along the ice foot of the Cape. Less than half way Nanook, halting the team, pointed up to where the crest of the Cape, like the wrinkled foil of silver, stood out against the sky. Over the crest, he continued, the Eskimos used to portage to the ice foot on the southern flank. We could save a long journey by climbing it, and what was more, we would be in the bear-den country the while. He hoped I wouldn't mind the climb. We would have to get in harness with the dogs and go at it in easy stages, just a little sledge load at a time—and he pantomimed the operation with his snow knife in the snow.

We see-sawed over the ice foot into land and struck up the Cape's big slope. But sometimes the twelve tigerish dogs and we four, bent half way to the ground, could only move the sledge by feet and inches. And there were drift banks into which the sledge jammed its nose and died. Leap after leap of the team and our "heave's" and "ho's" failed to dislodge it; we had to give back some precious feet, with snow knives smooth out the trail, and start again. The leaps and lunges of the team soon played them; each dog would blame his neighbour for their common plight, and forthwith fight to kill. Nanook's long whip, spitting terror amongst them, and the crew and I, pulling on traces, were

the only means of preventing death there and then. Finally cowed, they gasped at full length on the snow and we must wait long minutes until they got their wind again.

Whirlpools of drift, spinning down the slope, plastered us. By the time we reached the crest the wind was running wild. Nanook went off to locate igloo snow. I crouched behind the bulwark of the sledge and watched the towers and spirals and jets of drift bound from ledge to ledge, from slope to slope down to the ice foot, a white hair-line nine hundred feet below; the milky shreds and strings which were snow smoke, dragging over the illimitable fields of ice, over the sapphire which was sea, and on into the vague west where they were drowning the big orange of sun.

Never did Nanook's spiral of snow blocks build up so slowly. Before the first tier was up I crouched behind it and Nanook with his snow knife cut off a hunk of snow and tried to rub out the white of my frozen cheeks and nose. By the time the last block was set, black night was down. Nanook and the crew fed the dogs, coiled the harnesses, and sealed up the igloo's door. I had camp all made. The moss wick of the seal-oil lamp was sending off heart-warming little tongues of flame; hunks of snow in the pot above it were melted and warming up for scalding draughts of tea. Frozen seal meat and my beans were thawing; the willow mats were down, and the sleeping bags lay unrolled on the igloo's floor of snow. When Nanook had thawed out his frozen white nose and whiter cheeks and rubbed them red again, said he, his arms sweeping round the sparkling white dome which sheltered us: "Oh, surely no igloo of the kablunak is so wonderful!"

"Amen," said I.

For six days we hunted for bear dens among the pot holes along the talus slopes and through the deep ravines of the Cape's south flank. But even Nanook had to give in, for recent gales and heavy drifts made success impossible. "Had we more time," he pleaded, "even two weeks more, surely we would find a den." But there was still the bulk of the winter's filming to be done down at the base, and the margin of time to do it in, even if we returned in record time, would be very small.

At daybreak we struck out for home—the team a-gallop, or overrun by the coasting sledge dragging in their harnesses through the snow. In two hours we were across the ice foot and striking south across the frozen sea.

Day followed day—yellow suns and cloudless skies. The snow in those long slants of ethereal light was as glowing as so much satin, in folds upon the land and a blanket upon the sea. Sundogs—smudges of brass and ochre—hung for hours in the blue enamel of the sky.

Within ten days we reached the abandoned igloos of the trip going north, and home, said Nanook, smiling from ear to ear, was only three days off. But overnight came another drifter. For five days we crawled. The dogs' seal meat was finished; for Nanook and the crew there was little left but bones; my beans were down to crumbs; and home, with the going as it was, was still days away.

We were travelling along the lowest of the coast—so low that oftentimes we hardly knew whether we were on land or sea. Said Nanook: "The cache of oil we laid on the up trip is still two days farther on, but some time to-day we

should see the stump of driftwood which I found the day we reached the abandoned igloos. I left it up-ended in the snow—we'll get some red heat to-night if we find it." But though we hugged the coast that precious fuel, the only driftwood we found on all its two hundred miles, we never saw again. When night came, cross bars from the sledge and four two-hundred-foot rolls of film was the makeshift that boiled our tea.

For the next three days what food sustained the team was the igloo's scraps and crumbs. More rolls of film and splinters from the sledge made up our fuel. When we broke camp on the fourth morning the sky was clear; the wind was strong. The snow was packing hard. Said Nanook: "If we strip the sledge of its load, of the cameras, of the sleeping-bags and all, we'll see home by nightfall." So we left everything within the igloo, sealed up the snow block of door, and struck out for home. Nanook kept far out in the lead, and ever when the team slowed down he pretended to be spearing, or lying down with his arms and legs imitated the flippers of a basking seal. The team, weak though they were, never made such speed.

But when night came on there was no sign of the river's mouth or the post's cabin lights. The darkness thickened; we stumbled over ridges and drifts of snow. Nanook called out from the gloom ahead to halt and wait while he scouted for a course to follow through the hills ahead. Turning the sledge up on one runner we crouched behind it. An hour or more Nanook was gone. When he returned said he: "There is not light enough to see. Nothing to do but igloo till daylight comes." But Nanook and the crew had hardly un-

sheathed their knives when the wavering bands of the aurora began gathering in the north, and light as bright as moonlight lit up the snow. We swung off through a valley among the hills. Streamers like the fringes of titanic curtains hung over us, sometimes so low that even Nanook reached out his hand as if to feel them. For I do not know how many minutes, they swayed and swung, then more gentle became their undulations—their glow was dying. We had begun to believe the festival was over, when, like the lash of whips uncoiling, they broke out—maelstroms! wheels! whirlpools! lavender! cream! and apple-green! The light they shed, a cast of green, drenched the humble hills and slopes of snow. "Kapay!" exclaimed Nanook. "Kapay!" echoed the crew.

The baying of a pack of wolves brought us to our senses. The wolves were the dog army of the post.

"What—no bear!" said Stewart, the post trader, who with his interpreter came stamping into my cabin to welcome Nanook and me and get news of the trip. "What," he repeated, "six hundred miles of travellin', eight weeks away an' no bear!"

"Too bad, too bad," he muttered, "an' just to think that a week come Friday two huskies got a she-bear an' two cubs in a cave. 'Twould have made a fine aggie, they said, what with the fightin' an' all—throwin' the dogs through the air an' chargin' here an' chargin' there; an'," he continued, rubbing it in, "all this less'n a day away!"

VI

SPRING in the north is long in coming. It was not until the last week in May that two lone honking geese flying low over the post brought the natives running from their tents exclaiming "Awyung [spring] is here!" By the end of June all the snow, save deep drifts in ravines and along the slopes of hills, was gone. Arctic flowers, solid masses of purple, white, and yellow, sprang up through the tawn and russet mosses of the plains. Flock upon flock of geese like regiments came sailing through the sky, and coveys of ptarmigan hovered near the post and even perched upon the houses. Arctic salmon, burnished steel and silver, teemed in the mouths of the streams that tumbled into the sea, and among the islands lying off the coast were swarms of nesting sea pigeons and eiders. Every kayak that came paddling in was loaded, decks over, with scores of geese, salmon, eiders, and dozens of eggs for trade. The sun went down about ten and rose again about three; it did not go far below the blue line of northern hills, and the glow of it shot constantly up the sky, splashing colour on each cloud bank that sailed by. Everyone now slept when he willed; the voices of some rioting group of youngsters were always in the air.

Nanook was restless; the wanderlust again was upon him. He knew, he said one day when we were making the whale-boat ready for sea, where there were many white whales.

They played in a little bottle-necked harbour some three days' kayaking up the coast. We might, he continued hopefully, get the "big aggie" there.

Icefields still lay along the coast, the blue-green ribbons of water lanes amongst them ever changing with the working of the winds and tide. Came a driving nor'easter herding the floes to sea, and before the day was ended all that remained was a thin white line far out in the west.

Wild fowl in multitudes we encountered on the way. Under the leaning brows of cliffs that rose three hundred feet in air were strata of sea gulls and clouds of sea pigeons and big eiders. A weird medley were their wild cries and screams the reëchoing of our guns and the deep booming of the sea.

Where we landed for sea-pigeon eggs the sea pigeons swarmed like flies hardly an arm's length above us. As they came breast on, Nanook would hurl a piece of driftwood into them, bringing down three or four birds with a single throw.

With a gale from the west the icefields again came in, and, rafting high along the rock masses of the coast, kept us prisoners. We went inland, goose-hunting among the tundra's tiny ponds. The geese, having shed their wing feathers, were unable to fly. Over the spongy tundra they scattered here and there and everywhere. Only the young men had wind enough to run them down.

For two days we worked through every winding lane that opened with the tides, or hauled the boat up on to the floes as the lanes closed in again, until a providential offshore wind finally freed us and we bowled in to a bare rock strip of

point which proved to be Nanook's "Culelulewak noona" (the white whale land).

We dared not camp too near the bottle-necked entrance to the whale ground, for even from a mile away the banging of an oar against a gunwale might frighten the whales and drive them out to sea. We camped under the lee of a cliff a mile and a half distant, and upon its crest the men took turns as lookout. It was two weeks to a day when a school of some twenty, all told, came swinging in from sea. Nanook, leading the fleet of kayakers, slowly paddled toward the harbour's mouth. "Harry Lauder," carrying the Akeley camera, and myself with the hand camera and film retorts walked overland to the harbour head. We were hardly more than half way over when the lookout signalled that the whales were in. The kayakers at their fastest speed raced for the entrance, and side by side with paddles beating gunwales and all the shouts and yells their lungs could stand came slowly in. The deafening din threw the quarry into a panic. The whales' ear drums, Nanook had explained, are so sensitive that sound not only frightens but hurts them. Their snow-white bodies flashed in the sun as they came up to blow or to rush around the small loop of the harbour's end, only to meet the barriers of land. Time after time they tried to break through the kayak's cordon, only to be driven back again or harpooned if they came too near. For an hour the fight kept on, until five were harpooned. With their kayaks hitched in line, Nanook and his companions spent the remainder of the day towing in the kill and hauling them out on shore. Two days were consumed in cutting up and apportioning it. With the whaleboat full of meat which

Nanook was taking as presents to his people at the post, we left for the south, all the stock of film I carried exposed on Nanook's last "big aggie."

When August came Stewart, the trader, and I began speculating as to when the once-a-year little schooner, with its precious mail from home and news of the busy world, would come. We thumbed through the post diaries for dates of past arrivals and, averaging them up, made bets. A lookout was almost constantly on the hills, for a sack of sea biscuit was the prize for him who first should see her sails.

To poor old Nanook the world seemed empty. He hung about my cabin, talking over films we still could make if I would only stay on for another year. He never quite understood why I should have gone to all the fuss and pother of making the "big aggie" of him—the hunting, yes—but surely everyone knew the Eskimo, and could anything possibly be more common than dogs and sledges and snow houses? I tried to give him an idea of the big igloos the kablunak had for showing films. To him, the hundred and fifty of his fellow men, as many more at Great Whale, in the distant south, and at far-off Fort Chimo, and at Cape Wolstenholme, were practically the population of the world. The kablunak's movie igloo, into which thousands came, was utterly beyond his comprehension. They were many, I used to say, like the little stones along the shore. "And will all these kablunaks see our 'big aggie'?" he would ask. There was never need to answer, for incredulity was written large upon his face.

At last came the signal from the lookout on the hill.

Within two days I was aboard and the *Annie's* nose was headed south. Nanook followed in his kayak, until the *Annie*, gathering speed, gradually drew away. I saw him turn, still waving, toward his topek, which stood out from the low, melancholy waste of shore—all that he called home!

Less than two years later, I received word by the once-a-year mail that comes out of the north that Nanook was dead. Poor old Nanook! Our "big aggie," become "Nanook of the North," has gone into most of the odd corners of the world—into the desert of the Sahara, India, Burma, Siam, where audiences must be told that white means snow; and more kablunaks than there are stones around the shore of Nanook's home have looked upon Nanook, the kindly, the brave, the simple Eskimo.

THE END

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Flaherty, Robert Jos
My Eskimo friends. "Nanook of the north.
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